

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Responses

**Kimberley Bulletin #3: Released 7 April at
9:00am AWST**

Please check www.kams.org.au for the latest
bulletin.

This bulletin provides important information for Aboriginal
Controlled Organisations and communities in the Kimberley.

COVID-19 Information Hotline:

1800 020 080
(24 Hours)

If you require translating or interpreting services
to access this hotline call 131 450.

The Australian Government has released an
official app with the information you need to
know about #Coronavirus. Search "Coronavirus
Australia" in the Apple App Store and on Google
Play.

Key Messages:

- Has your community done a **Local Pandemic Action Plan**? If not, please email Covid19rcr@communities.wa.gov.au to start your plan.
- A majority of our communities across the Kimberley have started or completed their plans. We need this number to be 100% so everyone has a plan in place to stay safe and healthy.
- There are now 'level 3' restrictions to help stop the virus:
 - A two-person limit to gatherings (e.g. going to people's houses for dinner, fishing trips) or in public (e.g. at the park or river).
 - Sorry camps and funerals have a maximum of 10 people.
 - Restrictions on entering a remote community and travel are now in place (see this bulletin for further details)

COVID-19: STOP THE SPREAD



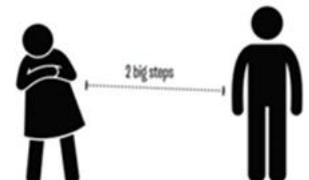
We need to always cover
our cough and sneeze.



Wash hands regularly and
avoid touching the face



We must keep our distance from other people, so no
shaking hands and keep at least 2 big steps away.



Regional travel restrictions

To recap on travel restrictions, it is important to remember there are lots of restrictions in place:



1. From midnight Thursday 2 April new boundaries, in line with the four local government areas (shires of Broome, Derby West Kimberley, Wyndham East Kimberley, Halls Creek) within the Kimberley region will be in place.

People must stay in their local government area. The existing exemptions apply, such as provision of essential services or supplies, freight, medical reasons or compassionate grounds.

2. The WA Government has announced the temporary closure of the Western Australian border. From 11.59pm, on Sunday, April 5, people will no longer be able to enter Western Australia without an exemption.

This is a temporary closure to limit the spread of the virus in WA. Exemptions are currently being finalised, and will include people who perform work functions, like:

- health services
- emergency service workers
- transport, freight and logistics
- specialist skills, not available in WA
- national or State security and governance
- courts and judicial services.

There will also be exemptions for FIFO workers and their families, however strict 14-day self-isolation measures will need to be followed when they first enter the State.

If you need more information please visit: www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus

New laws in place: Big fines if you don't follow physical distancing rules

It is important to keep your distance from other people (2 big steps away) to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

New laws to help enforce self-isolation and increased penalties for COVID-19 related incidents have passed through both houses of State Parliament on 2 April 2020.

Authorized officers will be able to issue directions necessary to impose self-isolation and physical distancing requirements. Amendments to the law also enable for emergency management authorities to direct that any road, access route or areas of water in or leading to an emergency area be closed.

The new law will enable authorities to issue \$1,000 on-the-spot fines for individuals and \$5,000 fines for businesses to act as a further deterrent against those in the community who simply do not follow new directions.

[For more information click here.](#)



Planning for your community

Get ready and proper organized now, before it's too late!

Each remote Aboriginal community should have a clear coordination structure for planning and leading the response to COVID-19. The **Western Australian Government Local Pandemic Plan** is designed to assist remote Aboriginal communities who do not have already have a pandemic action plan in place. The Local Pandemic Action Plan template will help you think about the things needing to go into your plan.

To get a copy of the template: [click here](#) or email: Covid19rcr@communities.wa.gov.au

Call: Jacinta Thompson on 0466 852 323, or Kelly McIntyre on 0418 473 720 or 9168 0370.

Self-isolation accommodation

Department of Communities is making assistance available for residents of remote Aboriginal communities who need temporary accommodation in town to self-isolate. Please contact 1800 032 965 (please note this number is Perth based).

The person in need will go through an intake process over the phone, then you will be transferred to a staff member in the Kimberley. If accommodation is required, the Kimberley worker contacts the accommodation provider that is best able to meet the person's needs and arranges meals and essential items, as required.



Un-used community buildings for isolation purposes

With the return of community members from regional towns, some remote community houses have become overcrowded. The Department of Communities is working with remote communities to identify properties that are suitable for emergency temporary occupation. Before allowing a property to be occupied, please speak with your housing officer or regional service provider to confirm that the property is suitable, which means that a test of electrical safety devices has been done in the past three months; and there are no known structural faults to the property.

Letting people know you're isolating

There are a range of useful resources available to help remote Aboriginal communities promote safety messages during COVID-19.

[Stay Strong When You Are Sick Poster](#)

[Elders Protected Area](#)

[Family Protected Area](#)

[Aboriginal Health Council of WA COVID-19 Prevention](#)

What about Easter?

Social distancing and travel restrictions still apply over long weekends and public holidays. Due to restrictions on gatherings, following the Prime Minister's announcement of 23rd March, churches across the country have closed both for private worship and public services. If you would like to access a service for Easter, please call your local church to see if any online options (live streaming) are available.

Money Business

Your income



If you lose your job because of coronavirus, you may be eligible to get financial support from Centrelink. You don't need to call or visit a service center to register your intention to claim. You can do it online through [myGov](https://my.gov.au). You only need to do this once. Centrelink will contact you to let you know the next steps.

For anyone already receiving Centrelink payments or allowances, you may automatically receive the Coronavirus Supplement: \$550 fortnightly payment from 27 April 2020 for up to six months, if you are eligible.

It is always smart to plan for after coronavirus too. Start thinking about new employment opportunities (like looking on seek.com.au) or take up a temporary job that has come up because of travel restrictions or increased demand on services. Search your local job boards or Chamber of Commerce to find these opportunities.

If you need further assistance from a financial counsellor visit www.financialcounsellors.org to find your nearest counselling services.

Your house



Renters: On Sunday 29 March 2020 Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that states and territories are moving to put a six-month stop on evictions in relation to commercial and residential tenancies, as part of measures to address the financial impacts of COVID-19. Once it is put in place in WA, this means landlords are not allowed to evict tenants in cases of severe financial hardship related to COVID-19, during that period of time.

Tenants must continue to pay what they can – these changes are about allowing time for tenants to get their financial situation sorted out, so they can start paying rent again as soon as it is practical to do so. Tenants may contact Tenancy WA on (08) 9221 0088.

If you're in a Department of Communities home:

- Keep paying rent. If you are having trouble paying, talk to your housing officer.
- All property inspections will be cancelled. They will be re-scheduled after State and Commonwealth COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.
- Maintenance will only be carried out if there is an immediate risk to health and safety. Tenant liability will not be charged for emergency repairs carried out while State and Commonwealth COVID-19 restrictions are in place.
- Rent calculations- Increases to Centrelink payments and the one-off \$750 payment, income from community members returning home from towns will not be included in rent calculations.

Homeowners: If you're struggling with your home loan repayments, there is help available. The earlier you get help, the more options you'll have. All lenders have hardship teams ready to help customers in tough times. Talk to your lender to discuss your options. You may be able change the terms of your loan, or temporarily pause or reduce your repayments. This is called a hardship variation. If you receive a default notice, do not ignore it. Talk to your lender or get free legal advice immediately (see below).

Your bills



You must keep paying your bills if you can. However, no households in Western Australia experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 will have their power or water disconnected, and no interest will be charged on deferred bill payments for those experiencing COVID-19-related financial hardship. This applies to Synergy and Horizon Power customers. Households that are directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19 may also apply for an interest-free payment arrangement and for late payment penalties to be waived for some bills.

Money Business

Emergency Relief

The Department of Communities (Disaster and Emergency Support Services) is offering support for Western Australians adversely impacted by COVID-19. For us Kimberley mob, that means you may be able to access some more support for you and your family if you need it.

The WA Department of Communities hotline supports people who are in genuine hardship who have met the COVID-19 conditions for self-isolating including:

1. Those who have been tested and diagnosed as positive
2. Those told by a healthcare professional to self-isolate
3. Those returning from interstate/ international environments

The hotline will support those people in accessing food, accommodation and personal support.

If you require assistance or further information phone the Department of Communities' Disaster Relief Hotline on **1800 032 965** or email emergencyservices@cpfs.wa.gov.au.

Legal Help

Kimberley Community Legal Services:

KCLS is a free community legal service that can help you with general legal, tenancy, financial counselling and debt, family violence, government benefits and a wide range of other issues.

KCLS is continuing to provide service via telephone, video chat, email, and even intercom at the front door of their offices. Contact as follows:

Broome Office: 08 9192 5177 Email: broomeoffice@kcls.org.au
Kununurra Office: 08 9169 3100 Email: office@kcls.org.au
Facebook: www.facebook.com/KimberleyCLS/ Web: kcls.org.au

Aboriginal Legal Service:

Aboriginal legal service provides support to Aboriginal clients on a wide range of legal issues, including criminal law, human rights, and some civil/family law matters.

Contact: FREECALL: 1800 019 900 / Web: <https://www.als.org.au/>

Aboriginal Family Law Service:

AFLS provides free legal assistance to survivors of family violence.

Contact: FREECALL: 1800 469 246 / Web: <https://www.afls.org.au/>

Legal Aid WA

Western Australians who are experiencing hardship because of COVID-19 now have greater access to legal support, with Legal Aid WA increasing its services in the community.

Contact: FREECALL 1300 650 579 / Web: www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

More Government 'COVID-19' funding announced

More funding from Federal and State governments, as well as private companies is planned to support the Kimberley over the next few years to help the region with COVID-19 impacts.

- [NIAA: Community Night Patrols will be bolstered with up to \\$10 million, \\$23 million will go towards enhancing the delivery of critical social support programs, including alcohol and other drug services, social and emotional wellbeing projects, family support and youth engagement and diversion programs.](#)
- [BHP: \\$50 million \(AUD\) Vital Resources Fund to help support regional Australian communities in its areas of operation and surrounding communities, facing significant challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
- [State Gov: \\$502 million for small businesses including a reduction in electricity bills, licenses fees waived, and additional payroll tax relief and \\$500 million allocated to health and other frontline service delivery, and capacity for additional industry support](#)

Your questions answered

If you hear or read something and you're not sure, check the facts: www.kams.org.au or read the WA Government's [Frequently Asked Questions help sheet](#)

1. How can I protect myself / my family?

The best way to protect yourself is the same as you would against any respiratory infection. Practice good hygiene by:



2. I'm pregnant, should I be worried?

Pregnant women should be considered a vulnerable or at-risk group. There have been a handful of very recent case reports suggesting that the virus may pass from the mother to the baby (vertical transmission). However, this is very early, preliminary data and has not been confirmed. There was no evidence of harm to the babies. It is important to keep checking in with your doctor throughout your pregnancy. Please visit [Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(RANZCOG\) website](#) or call 1800 020 080 if you have more questions.

3. How do I talk to my kids about Coronavirus? Are they too little to understand?

Every child is different, but by now most kids are noticing things changing and aware that there is a nasty germ going around. This might make them worry or feel scared. It's ok to talk to young kids about their worry and reassure them that things will be OK.

The [Raising Children Network](#) has information and an advice line about coronavirus and children including links to resources for parents on talking to children about disaster and distressing events which may assist parents of anxious children.

Kids Questions

4. Why is the germ making people so sick?

Part of the reason the new coronavirus is making people so sick is because it's brand new and no-one's ever had it before. No-one's bodies know how to fight it. Another reason it's making people so sick is because it's so new we don't have medicines that can help people who are sick with it. But scientists are working hard to find the right medicines to help people who get sick with this coronavirus.



5. When can I see my grandparents and elders again?

It can be really hard to stay away from people you love, especially elders and grandparents. But one of the things we know about COVID-19, the disease caused by this new coronavirus, is that it's most dangerous for people who are older. Aboriginal people who are more than 50 years old, and people who already have problems with their lungs or heart or other health problems, are more likely to need to go to hospital if they get COVID-19. And because we don't have medicines yet to help protect these people, we have to help protect them by staying away - just in case we have the virus and don't realize it. Maybe you could talk to your grandparents or older people that you love through video chat, talk on the phone or write a letter or email to them.

6. Will the Easter Bunny be able to come to the Kimberley this year? I heard that no one can come into Australia because of COVID-19?

Official word from WA Premier Mark McGowan is that the Easter Bunny has been given an 'eggs-emption' pass to travel through to remote regions like the Kimberley to spread Easter cheer.

Stay socially and emotionally healthy- its important too!

How many feel good things can you do this week?

- Talking to others (over the phone, email or on social media)
- Tell a joke, tell a good memory or story, and have a laugh with family.
- Practice hobbies, art and cultural practices where possible, or try a new hobby
- Spend some time in your backyard and get some sunshine
- Pat your cat or dog, or play some fetch
- Practicing speaking language at home (learn a new word or phrase!)
- Keeping physically healthy (good nutrition and exercise)
- Play a guitar or instrument, or listen to your favorite music
- Tidy up the house and de-clutter, or do a project around the house
- Make up a funny song to sing when you wash your hands- get everyone signing with you extra loud!
- Limiting (or stopping) substance and grog use – healthy body and mind!
- Engaging with routines where you can (like cooking dinner or morning routines)
- Saying 'no' to watching news and social media all the time (lots of scary or sad news can impact our moods)
- Identify any early feelings/behaviours that impact on wellbeing.
- Seek extra support when you feel very sad, worry or stress. Don't bottle things up by yourself.
- Support kids to understand what's happening in a calm way, so they can manage their own worry too



24/7 Mental Health Services

healthdirect

Beyond Blue

Anyone feeling anxious or depressed

 beyondblue.org.au
 1300 22 4636

Kids Helpline

Counselling for young people aged 5 to 25

 kidshelpline.com.au
 1800 55 1800

MensLine Australia

Men with emotional or relationship concerns

 mensline.org.au
 1300 78 99 78

Open Arms

Veterans and families counselling

 openarms.gov.au
 1800 011 046

Lifeline

Anyone having a personal crisis

 lifeline.org.au
 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service

Anyone thinking about suicide

 suicidcallbackservice.org.au
 1300 659 467



Is it an emergency?

If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, call triple zero (000)

Important resources to find out more:

Commonwealth Biosecurity Determination link: <http://www.wa.gov.au/aboriginalcommunities>

Department of Communities link: <https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Department of Communities email: Covid19rcr@communities.wa.gov.au

WA Department of Health link: <https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus>

WA Government link: <https://www.wa.gov.au/>