



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health

**The Hon. Ken Wyatt AM MP**  
Minister for Indigenous Australians

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

5 June 2020

### **Remote travel restrictions lifted in Western Australia**

Western Australia will join the Northern Territory in lifting travel restrictions across remote communities on Friday, 5 June 2020.

The Australian Government has taken this action in response to a request by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health and Mental Health of Western Australia, The Hon. Roger Cook MLA, to lift the restrictions currently in place through the Emergency Determination under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

The decision to lift the Emergency Determination in Western Australia is based on expert advice from the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy, and is in line with the Framework for Easing Remote Restrictions announced by the Prime Minister on 15 May 2020.

This decision has the full support of the Western Australia Land Councils and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in the state.

The Western Australian Government will continue to provide ongoing protection of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through its own [Remote Aboriginal Communities Direction](#).

In March, the Government made the decision to restrict travel into remote communities under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, to minimise the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic following calls from many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and remote communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are at greater risk from COVID-19. This is because:

- There are higher rates of other health issues in remote communities.
- It can be harder to access health care.
- People in the community are very mobile and travel often.
- People often rely more on outreach services in remote places.

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

Ensuring the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a Government priority and remains a focus of the COVID-19 National Emergency Response Plan, and the Management Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Populations.

The Government will continue to monitor the situation in Western Australia in partnership with the Western Australian Government, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and AHCWA.

In the event of an outbreak of COVID-19, the Australian Government will work with the Western Australian Government to move rapidly and take all necessary steps to continue to safeguard the health of remote communities, in line with the Western Australian Chief Health Officer's directive.

Requests from other jurisdictions to exit the Determination will be considered in accordance with the Remote Framework.

For further information on the Remote Framework, visit the [Department of Health website](#).

### ***BACKGROUND***

On 18 March 2020, the Governor-General declared a human biosecurity emergency in relation to the global outbreak of the listed human disease COVID-19 under section 475 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Following that declaration, On 26 March 2020, the Minister for Health made an Emergency Determination under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* to restrict travel into remote communities in order to minimise the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic into these communities.

**ENDS**