



## **Media Release**

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### **Lock down Central Australia to protect all of Central Australia**

The Central Australian Aboriginal Congress is calling for more serious and effective public health measures to be put in place urgently; before it's too late.

“We need to see sharp and serious action to respond what are growing case numbers in Alice Springs and surrounding Central Australian communities.” Said Congress Acting CEO Josie Douglas.

“The lockout isn't working. People are still moving around, and the virus is still spreading among vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

“Hospitalisation are now increasing, along with ICU admissions. 78 people in hospital in the NT is the equivalent of 2800 people in NSW. We are now on a par with NSW but we will pass this peak without decisive action and our health system has less capacity.”

“We are calling for a complete lockdown of Central Australia to be implemented urgently. A Tsunami of COVID cases is coming and we need a circuit breaker.

“Congress knows from our own experience that the curve is not flattening amongst Aboriginal people in Central Australia, and the community needs to know this.” Continued Ms Douglas.

“The stop in movement that would be forced by a lockdown, along with support from the Government with contact tracing, testing and isolation, would mean that we can get on top of the emerging case numbers that we continue to report. It would buy precious time for a surge workforce to be assembled and redeployed. The Commonwealth Government has a critical role here and we call on them to come to the aid of the Northern Territory as we stare down this disaster.”

Congress have been responding to the health crisis that is rapidly unfolding on the ground, providing testing, contact tracing and care to as many people as possible for the health service.

“Congress has responded in every way possible, redeploying staff, closing supplementary services and clinics, and still we can't plug the holes made by the Territory government's seeming lack of care for Aboriginal people.” Ms Douglas stated.

“We were told in every plan that preceded this outbreak that the focus would be to test, trace, isolate and quarantine. Instead, we have a response that seems to have left people to fend for themselves in overcrowded houses where it is not possible to safely isolate without spreading the virus to others.

Lengthy delays in getting people into isolation has contributed to the spike we are seeing in positive cases.” She continued.

“We have hand our hands extended every step of the way looking to collaborate and to partner, but we have been left to try to do it all ourselves. This was not part of any plan.

“We ask the Government to look after all Central Australians by getting this emerging crisis under control and to do what is needed; a circuit breaking lockdown.”

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