



Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

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APY remains on high alert to keep Lands free of virus

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As we watch Victoria try to grapple with escalating outbreaks of COVID-19, it is a timely reminder of how quickly this virus can turn the tables on any area.

As of today, health authorities believe at least 438 cases in Victoria may be the result of unknown community transmission.

This highlights why APY must remain vigilant in keeping our Lands free of COVID-19.

South Australian Premier Steven Marshall last week acknowledged the hard work undertaken by APY General Manager Richard King, his staff and members of the Executive Board to ensure that if there was any transmission of COVID-19 to the Lands, measures are in place to respond to, manage and mitigate any outbreak.

The Premier, in a letter to Mr King, assured APY that, “in consideration of border closure issues, we will continue to have regard to the views of Anangu”.

APY will continue to tirelessly work to advocate for the health and safety of all Anangu.

As previously advised, the APY Executive Board on June 29 resolved to “opt out” of the Commonwealth Biosecurity Declaration, which restricts travel into remote Indigenous communities, including APY. The Board will continue to work with Nganampa Health, SA Health and SAPOL to ensure Anangu remain safe whilst enabling the repatriation of those members who are currently not on the Lands.

While we wait for the Commonwealth to formally confirm APY’s removal from the Declaration, the following entry process to the Lands must apply to keep everyone safe:

Anyone wishing to enter the APY Lands without self-isolation must be COVID-19-symptom free and:

- Submit a completed application to enter and email to: sapol.farnorthadministration@police.sa.gov.au
- Submit a completed Record of Health Status form and email to: sapol.farnorthadministration@police.sa.gov.au
- For non-Anangu it is important to complete and send an APY permit application via the APY Permits Officer to: permits@Anangu.com.au
- Unless there is a current and approved employer or organisational Risk Management Plan in place, all applicants will be provided with risk management advice and documentation relative to social distancing, cleaning and hygiene.

Police advise that if these conditions are met and complied with, there will be no need to undertake a period of isolation prior to entry.

Once the Commonwealth Biosecurity withdrawal is formalised the Executive will require all APY Permit applicants, in addition to the general entry permit documentation, to:

- Submit a completed Record of Health Status form and email via the APY Permits Officer to: permits@Anangu.com.au
- Submit an approved individual or organisational Biosecurity Risk Management Plan. All plans will be reviewed centrally by SA Health Human Biosecurity Officers. Email via the APY Permits Officer to: permits@Anangu.com.au

The Board's decision to opt out of the Commonwealth Declaration and be subject to South Australian COVID-19 restrictions followed a briefing from SA Police Superintendent Paul Roberts, who is the lead co-ordinator for the APY Lands Biosecurity area. The Board also heard from APY Director Rex Tjami, Chairwoman Sally Scales and Member for Indulkana Bernard Singer, who serve alongside Supt Roberts on the State Emergency Management Committee and Remote and Vulnerable Communities Sub Committee.

The Board heard that Anangu had been moving away from densely populated areas in Adelaide and Port Augusta and wished to return home to the APY Lands. These Anangu were sleeping rough. It was agreed that they should return to the APY Lands as quickly as possible given COVID-19 restrictions in metropolitan Adelaide were being rolled back. This could increase their potential exposure to any outbreak of the virus.

Increases in COVID-19 cases around the country were discussed by the Board and it resolved to utilise the APY Land Rights Act to implement measures to ensure anyone applying to enter the Lands does so safely.

The Board heard that Anangu wished to travel within the tri-border area of NT/WA/SA for cultural and sorry business. The Board resolved to support ongoing communication between Aboriginal organisations and parliamentarians in the region about ease of movement within this area.

The Board resolved to add its voice in calling on the SA government to keep state borders closed for now.

Contact tracing was discussed with Anangu returning to country to inform SAPOL of where and when they are returning to the APY Lands and who they will be seeing or living with. SAPOL will oversee this.

Forms are available on the APY website at: <https://www.anangu.com.au/>