



Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

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MEDIA STATEMENT: APY remains on high alert to keep Lands free of virus

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South Australian Premier Steven Marshall has acknowledged responsible steps undertaken by APY Administration and the Executive Board to keep remote Aboriginal communities free of COVID-19.

The Premier noted that if there was any transmission of COVID-19 to the Lands, measures were in place to respond to, manage and mitigate any outbreak.

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

The Board last month resolved to add its voice in calling on the South Australian government to keep state borders closed for now.

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 SA Police to ensure Anangu remain safe whilst enabling the repatriation of those members who are currently not on the Lands.

The Commonwealth has formally confirmed APY’s removal from the Declared area. However, anyone wishing to enter the APY Lands without self-isolation must be COVID-19-symptom free. They also must complete and submit necessary paperwork, including for appropriate entry permits.

APY Executive requires all visitors to hold a general entry permit documentation to guarantee they are of good health, have not been overseas or had contact with anyone who has recently travelled overseas (two weeks), have not been to Victoria or NSW, and to provide an address when they are on the Lands.

The decision to opt out of the Commonwealth Declaration and be subject to South Australian COVID-19 restrictions came after 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.

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 who wished to travel within the tri-border area of NT/WA/SA for cultural and sorry business will have to check restrictions in each jurisdiction. The Board resolved to support ongoing communication between Aboriginal organisations and parliamentarians in the region about ease of movement within this area.

Mr King said: “As long as South Australia remains COVID-19 free, then we'll remain open ... but we're ready to close down if we need to.”

For further information please contact Richard King on 0401 124 876