



Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

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MEDIA STATEMENT: APY Lands borders to close for three weeks as COVID threat rises

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The APY Lands, like the rest of South Australia, is facing its biggest COVID threat since the outbreak earlier this year.

As a result of the dangerous Parafield cluster, the APY Executive Board of Management today held an emergency meeting and resolved to close its borders for three weeks from midnight on Tuesday, November 17.

South Australia's Chief Public Health Officer has characterised this cluster as more dangerous than the Thebarton cluster earlier in the year given it involves multiple public venues.

APY is aware that at any one time there can be up to 200 people including women and children from the APY Lands in Adelaide, shopping and catching up with family. Indigenous people are at greater risk of hospitalisation and death during a virus outbreak.

There are now 34 active cases in the state including 18 in the past 48 hours.

This is very concerning for the APY Board of Management and they are taking this very seriously.

APY initially will manage its borders via the legislated system of permits and hold further discussions with relevant authorities over coming days about other measures. For essential services, entry will be facilitated through the APY Permits process.

People currently on the APY Lands can leave, however people coming into the APY Lands will have to self-isolate for 14 days.

Further planning to ensure the APY Lands remains COVID free will continue with relevant authorities in coming days.

In South Australia, for a two-week period, gyms, recreation centres, play cafes and similar venues will be closed. Community sport and training will be temporarily cancelled - indoor and outdoor. However, the Premier has declared that schools will stay open.

Funerals will be capped at 50 (one person per 4sqm), churches capped at 100, while all weddings will now be registered guests only and capped at 150. Gatherings at private residences will be restricted to 10 guests.

APY General Manager Richard King urged Anangu to be safe and not to undertake unnecessary travel.

"If you are elderly or considered vulnerable, stay at home. Avoid visitors for now," Mr King said.

“If we all work together, hopefully we can lift restrictions sooner and return to normal. APY urges all Anangu and any visitors to the APY Lands to follow health advice to stop the spread of this disease.

“We’ve seen what can happen in other jurisdictions when people don’t follow government recommendations - it can be disastrous and it will be devastating for Indigenous populations.”

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

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.

For information on the Permits process visit: <https://www.anangu.com.au/en/apy-programs/permits>

For further information please contact Richard King on 0401 124 876