



## Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on coronavirus (COVID-19)

Welcome to the electronic newsletter update to provide key information to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, communities and stakeholders. Things are changing quickly, and it's important to stay informed. Visit [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au) and [niaa.gov.au](https://www.niaa.gov.au).

### Key updates

- New restrictions on public gatherings
- Staying at home is the safest place to avoid the virus
- Impacts on Ceremony and Sorry Business
- Expansion of telehealth
- Remote community restrictions

### New restrictions on public gatherings

The Government has announced new restrictions to public gatherings, to help protect communities from the spread of coronavirus.

Only two people can be out at public places together. This can be enforced. You could receive a fine if you are in a public place in a group of more than two people.

These restrictions do not apply to members of the same household. You should limit visitors to your home.

We need to work together to inform and encourage everyone we know, and in particular Elders and people over the age of 50 with a chronic disease, to please stay home. Let's keep our mob safe.

Visit [Australia.gov.au](https://www.australia.gov.au) for the latest advice and links to the rules for each state and territory.

### **Staying at home is the best place to avoid the virus**

The best place to be during the coronavirus outbreak is at home. Avoid going out unless you need to go to work or get essential items like food or medical supplies.

This is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians over the age of 50 who have existing health conditions or chronic illness.

[Sean Choolburra has some tips to stay safe at home, during this time.](#)

[Download and share these key health messages on your social media platforms.](#)

### **Impacts on Ceremony and Sorry Business**

Culture and ceremony, such as large gatherings for Sorry Business, are very important to our communities. However, with restrictions on indoor and outdoor gatherings, we need to look at ways to do this differently to protect our communities from the spread of the virus.

While restrictions are in place, we need to change how we go about Ceremony and Sorry Business, to avoid physical contact as much as possible and keep groups of people smaller. This will help protect our Elders and those who already have health problems.

Talk to your Elders, family or land council about safe ways to undertake Sorry Business during these times.

### **Expansion of telehealth**

The safest place for you and your family is at home in your own community. If you are sick, you can now use a service called telehealth where a Doctor will use a video or phone call to provide you with medical advice. This helps reduce the spread of the virus at health clinics and services.

Expansion of the government telehealth services will enable patients that are vulnerable to coronavirus to be bulk billed.

This includes all people over 70, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people over 50, people with chronic health conditions, pregnant women and people with new babies, people in isolation/quarantine, and people who meet testing guidelines for coronavirus.

You can see a Doctor via telehealth for a non-coronavirus matter if you have seen that Doctor or one at the same clinic, face-to-face in the last year.

Information about access to telehealth services will be made available by health services and clinics.

### **Remote community restrictions**

Travel restrictions for remote communities are now in place in the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Community restrictions are in place to help stop the spread of the coronavirus and keep remote communities safe.

While the restrictions are in place, only people delivering an essential service or medical treatment can enter. You may be able to move between communities within the same restricted area, but it is better to stay in your own community rather than risk spreading the virus between communities. You may need to self-isolate for 14 days before you can enter a different community area.

You can find state and territory maps/border information at the following links.

- [National](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Western Australia](#)

If you aren't already in the community, you need to self-isolate for 14 days before you can enter. Visit [niaa.gov.au](http://niaa.gov.au) for more information and links to specific advice for each state and territory. Together we can help stop the virus and keep our communities strong.

### **For more information**

- Visit [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au) for the latest national medical advice.
- Call your local Aboriginal Medical Service, or someone you trust in the community if you feel unwell.
- Call the 24-hour National COVID-19 Helpline on 1800 020 080.
- Visit [niaa.gov.au](http://niaa.gov.au) for information about community closures.

**HELP OUR COMMUNITIES TO STAY HEALTHY, STRONG AND CONNECTED, BY SHARING TIPS ONLINE #KEEPOURMOBSAFE**

