



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)

[Why not share this newsletter with someone you think would appreciate it?](#)

Key messages

- Three-step plan to lifting restrictions
- Quit smoking to stay strong
- New resources for managing wellbeing
- Our sector leading the way
- Health video messages

Three-step plan to lifting restrictions

The rates of infection from coronavirus have remained low across Australia since mid-April. Governments have started to take careful steps to lift some of the restrictions that have been in place to stop the spread of the virus.

The National Cabinet has outlined a national three-step plan to gradually ease restrictions and get the economy going again.

You can find out about the three-step plan [here](#). Each state and territory will lift restrictions at different times. This will be based on the situation in that state or territory. The number of people allowed at various places and gatherings may be different in each state and territory. So it's important to keep up to date with the latest information for your region.

- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Western Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [ACT](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [New South Wales](#)

Easing restrictions doesn't mean we have beaten the virus. The virus is still spreading in the community. We must continue to:

- practise physical distancing (staying two big steps away from people wherever we can)
- maintain good hand washing and hygiene
- stay home when we're unwell
- get tested if we have cold or flu-like symptoms
- download the COVIDSafe app
- make sure our workplaces are safe for employees.

By doing all of these things we can continue to #KeepOurMobSafe

[Check out this video from Professor Marcia Langton about staying safe.](#)

Quit smoking to stay strong

31 May is World No Tobacco Day, an important reminder of the risks of smoking and the impacts on our health and body.

You might be feeling more stress at the moment, but if you can manage to stop smoking, now is a really good time to do it.

People who smoke are more at risk of developing serious health problems if they get coronavirus than non-smokers.

We know that when you quit, within a week your lungs' natural cleaning system starts to recover and improve. Within two months, your coughing and wheezing decrease and most importantly your immune system begins to recover. This means your body is better at fighting off infection.

If you need help to quit smoking, have a yarn with a counsellor on the Aboriginal Quitline (13 78 48) or download the My QuitBuddy app.

During the coronavirus outbreak, the number of people who have downloaded the My Quitbuddy app has increased greatly, so you will be in good company if you decide to quit. The community forum on the app is a useful and supportive way to connect with other quitters while applying physical distancing.

If you are smoking, make sure to wash your hands with soap as much as possible, do not share smokes and make sure not to smoke inside or around family.

[View this video message from National Tackling Indigenous Smoking Coordinator, Professor Tom Calma AO.](#)

New resources for managing wellbeing

Finding healthy ways to cope with and manage stress and anxiety is really important for our wellbeing. It's normal to be feeling these types of emotions, and you shouldn't feel shame – there are tools to help us all through this time.

Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia, the new national Indigenous wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention leadership body, has launched a range of wellbeing support resources to help communities and families stay strong during the coronavirus outbreak.

- [Five free posters to stay strong and healthy](#)
- [Looking After Ourselves – Our Way](#)
- [How Are You Coping with Coronavirus](#)

If you are concerned about yourself or someone close to you, visit [Gayaa Dhuwi](#) and [Beyond Blue](#) for resources and tips to look after mental health and wellbeing. You can also call these help lines:

- Lifeline - 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue - 1300 22 46 36
- Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Service - 1800 51 23 48

You can also access mental health and wellbeing resources online.

- [Head to Health](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)
- [Black Dog Institute](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Lifeline](#)

Remember, this will pass. We need to look after ourselves, and each other during this time. Being strong is knowing when to ask for help.

Our sector leading the way

The [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee on COVID-19](#) has been working closely with governments to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the coronavirus pandemic. The group is co-chaired by the NACCHO and the Australian Department of Health.

At the time of writing, no cases of coronavirus have been recorded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in a remote community. This is a fantastic achievement and something we should all be very proud of.

Our health workers, community-controlled health sector and communities are working hard to keep our mob safe during these times.

[Check out this message from Danielle Dries on helping health workers stay safe.](#)

Let's keep up the great work!

Health video messages

A series of videos have been recorded with Professor Tom Calma AO, and representatives from the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) with important health messages for communities about staying safe from coronavirus.

- [Keep our mob safe](#)
- [Get your flu shot](#)
- [Keeping medical appointments](#)
- [Look after Elders](#)
- [While in isolation](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing](#)
- [Staying well](#)
- [Good hygiene](#)

Organisations can download these videos for free, to share through their networks, on their website and through social media.

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

