

Date Issued 18 March 2020

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

TIWI LAND COUNCIL and EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TOWNSHIP LEASING

RESTRICTION OF ENTRY TO THE TIWI ISLANDS

A Restriction of Entry for the Tiwi Islands has been issued from 18 March 2020 and will remain in place until further notice.

At the direction of the Tiwi Land Council, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Tipungwuti, has determined that, in response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus threat, all existing non-essential permits to the land and seas within the Tiwi Aboriginal Land Trust region are revoked and no new non-essential permits will be granted until further notice.

The revocation of permits applies to all areas across Bathurst and Melville Islands administered in the Tiwi Land Trust region and includes public access to homelands and the Tiwi College at Pickataramoor.

In addition, the Executive Director of Township Leasing, Ms Pennie Weedon, has issued a Restriction of Entry for the following remote Indigenous communities on the Tiwi Islands:

Wurrumiyanga (Nguiu) on Bathurst Island
Wurankuwu (Ranku) on Bathurst Island
Milikapiti (Snake Bay) on Melville Island
Pirlangimpi (Garden Point) on Melville Island

The decision by the Executive Director of Township Leasing to restrict access to Wurrumiyanga, Wurankuwu, Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi has been requested by the Traditional Owners who are concerned about protecting their elders and others who are vulnerable due to health conditions, and is made with the agreement of the Tiwi Land Council and the Tiwi Aboriginal Land Trust.

The decision by the Executive Director of Township Leasing is also a determination under Subsection 70F(12) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* imposing temporary restrictions for the purpose of protecting public health.

Exemptions for all areas apply to Tiwi Island families and other residents of the communities returning home; personnel delivering emergency and essential services, and to other personnel to ensure business continuity of existing service delivery who are not demonstrating any health issues.

Other exemptions will be determined by the Tiwi Land Council and the Executive Director of Township Leasing on a case by case basis.

It is expected that all service delivery agencies will ensure Commonwealth and Northern Territory public health advice is followed and that all agency personnel currently operating on the Tiwi Islands adhere to official protocols in order to protect the health of community members.

Please note if you are unwell for any reason then medical clearance will be required. For any medical assistance please seek support from a professional health service.

Contacts

Tiwi Land Council

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Office of Township Leasing

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NIAA Media Contact

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For current information about COVID-19 Coronavirus:

Coronavirus Health Information Line

1800 020 080

Call for information on Coronavirus COVID-19. Operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NT Remote Travel Hotline

1800 518 189

For information regarding essential travel to remote communities.

NT Mass Gathering Hotline

1800 518 055

For information to assess clinical risk of large gatherings and events.

Australian Government Department of Health

<https://www.health.gov.au/>

Latest news, alerts and situation status within Australia. Protection advice and fact sheets.

SecureNT

<https://securent.nt.gov.au/>

Latest news, alerts, situation status and advice relevant to the Northern Territory. Health message recordings in Aboriginal languages.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

<https://www.who.int/>

Public advice for personal and organisational protection, global situation updates.