

Date Issued 25 March 2020

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

TIWI LAND COUNCIL and EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TOWNSHIP LEASING

RESTRICTION OF ENTRY TO THE TIWI ISLANDS

A further Restriction of Entry has been issued and will come into effect from **7pm on 26 March 2020** and will remain in place until further notice for the 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 Restriction of Entry has been issued by the Executive Director of Township Leasing, Ms Pennie Weedon, in response to the ongoing risk to public health currently posed by the potential spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

At the direction of the Tiwi Land Council, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Tipungwuti, has also declared the closure of all remaining land and seas within the Tiwi Aboriginal Land Trust in response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus threat.

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.

This 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.

The closure of all areas across Bathurst and Melville Islands by the Tiwi Land Council includes public access to homelands and the Tiwi College at Pickataramoor.

The Restriction of Entry commenced from 18 March 2020 and now includes the landing of all regular passenger transport (RPT) aircraft at airport terminals and passenger boats docking at ferry/pontoon facilities.

Exemptions only apply to personnel required to enter the community to deliver emergency and essential services.

Tiwi families are strongly advised to restrict their travel outside of the Tiwi Islands during this time.

It is expected that all emergency and essential service 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.

Contacts

Tiwi Land Council

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Office of Township Leasing

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

NIAA Media Contact

media@niaa.gov.au
niaa.gov.au/news-centre
<https://www.indigenous.gov.au/news-and-media>

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.