



Yamatji Marlpa
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS: YMAC RESPONSE

Following global concerns surrounding the COVID-19 Coronavirus, YMAC would like to advise our valued clients of actions we are undertaking to support a clean, safe working environment, and in reducing the risk and impact of the virus in our community.

YMAC is daily seeking information from the following trusted sources to inform our actions:

- **Australian Government Department of Health:**
www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert
- **Australian Government Smart Traveller:** Smartraveller.gov.au
- **WA Government Department of Health:**
https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus
- **WA Government Pandemic Plan:** www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/western-australian-government-pandemic-plan
- **World Health Organisation:** www.who.int

We encourage you to regularly check in to these websites for information and guidance, and regular updates on government response to the Coronavirus.

YMAC response

YMAC knows that many of the communities we work with are particularly vulnerable. Our priority is to reduce the risk to our clients and their communities, and to our staff.

This is a rapidly changing situation and while risk of transmission in Australia remains low, we are following government advice that West Australians should remain alert, but not to be alarmed.

Last week native title representative bodies across Australia have received an update from National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) about its response to COVID-19, and this information is guiding our own decision making.

The NIAA advised they are communicating regularly with agencies such as the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Companies (ORIC), National Native Title Tribunal, and Federal Courts, about the impact of COVID-19 on the native title sector, and the need to be pragmatic and flexible. We will continue to work closely with these agencies to discuss our clients' needs and what is possible during this time.

We will strive for continuity in delivering our services during this time, and wherever possible will be adapting work practises – or adopting new ones - to suit this unusual situation

Planned meetings and cancellation

Based on how NIAA is proceeding, YMAC has decided to cancel and/or postpone larger meetings beyond 27 March 2020, to reduce health risk to staff, our clients and their communities. Meetings prior to 27 March will proceed, subject to the approval of each group.

Decisions about meetings will be made taking into consideration the circumstances of each group, including if other parties are involved (e.g. proponents, Federal Court). This is so that all options for the safest way to deliver continued support are explored, whilst also meeting our clients' legal and corporate obligations.

In the event a meeting will proceed, YMAC staff will liaise with each group about what procedures we will undertake to reduce risk (e.g. larger meeting space to support social distancing, no handshaking or hugs, etc.). Please do note that a meeting may be cancelled at short notice should the COVID-19 situation change.

YMAC Response Plan

A Response Plan is being finalised, with many actions already underway. These include:

1. Providing daily updates to staff
2. Increasing workplace cleanliness measures such as making sure hand sanitiser is available, encouraging social distancing (being 1.5m apart from others), regularly wiping work surfaces with antibacterial cloths.
3. Requesting all YMAC staff to only undertake **essential** travel. If a staff member is not comfortable travelling, they will not be forced to do so. Similarly, if a client or client group is not comfortable having a face-to-face meeting, YMAC will consider alternate ways of meeting, or postpone activity where possible.
4. Monitoring all staff overseas and interstate travel (work and personal) and following government advice by asking people returning from overseas to self-isolate for 14 days. This may also extend to interstate travel should the need arise.
5. Directing any staff member showing signs of illness to stay home. Staff are to be tested prior to returning to work if their circumstances show they may have been exposed to COVID-19.
6. Undertaking a trial of working from home across all office locations this Wednesday 18 March, to test the organisation's capability to support working from home.
7. Considering alternate and new ways to deliver our services and support.

Event Cancellations

Yule River July 2020: Regretfully, the 2020 Annual On-Country Bush Meeting at Yule River that YAMC has supported through coordination and logistics for many years will be cancelled for 2020. YMAC will consult with Pilbara Aboriginal Voice and its Regional Committees to develop alternate ways to advocacy on social issues.

April and May National Native Title Council (NNTC) workshops: Workshops and forums scheduled to be delivered by the National Native Title Council in partnership with YMAC in April and May have now been cancelled. New dates will be set in consultation with the NNTC.

New dates for AIATSIS 2020 conference: On Friday 13 March the co-convenors of the NTC20, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and NTSCORP made the decision to postpone the National Native Title Conference 2020 to **18 - 21 October 2020**, as a result of the changing and widespread impacts of COVID-19.

NNTC Treaties Summit 2020: The organising partners of the National Treaties Summit have also decided to **postpone** the Summit scheduled for 16-18 April in Melbourne. Organisers will be rescheduling dates. You can contact campaigns@antar.org.au if you have any questions.

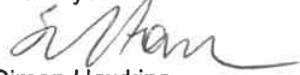
Further information

As a community, it is important we all act to prevent the spread of the virus.

The WA Council of Social Services (WACOSS) has developed some very useful resources and links to assist individuals and community organisations. To read more on safety precautions, contingency planning and advocacy please visit: <https://wacoss.org.au/community-services-covid-19-resources/> for the full WACOSS Special Bulletin.

Thank you for your ongoing support. YMAC will provide updates on our website as they become available. Please do not hesitate to contact YMAC should you have any queries about our services during this time.

Thank you.


Simon Hawkins
Chief Executive Officer
16 March 2020