Hello,

We hope that continue to stay safe and well. This is our fourth COVID-19 Update.

YMAC is very happy that Australia has been experiencing low infection numbers, to the extent that both the Federal and State Government recently announced an easing of restrictions – see more about this below.

It is important to remember that there is still no vaccine. The government continues to remind us Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people in remote communities are at greater risk of serious illness if they are infected with coronavirus if they:

- are aged 50 years and over with chronic medical conditions
- are aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions
- have a weakened immune system
- are aged 70 years and over

YMAC's website contains regular blog posts, media statements and advocacy updates being undertaken, as well as links to key government information available online.

YMAC UPDATE
YMAC Office closures – staggered staff return from 25 May

In line with the Premier's Phase 2 announcement easing COVID-19 restrictions. YMAC is planning a staggered re-opening of its Perth and regional offices so that staff can return to the office. Staff will begin this staggered start returning from 25 May, with those classified as vulnerable continuing to work from home for now.

As many YMAC members and clients are in also in the vulnerable category, YMAC staff will continue to provide services to members and clients either by phone or internet (rather than in person), during this phase.

While we are unable to accept visitors during this time, we continue to deliver services. This includes identifying a range of digital meeting options to suit the needs of our clients - including those in remote locations - and the purpose of the meeting.

YMAC's Hedland Office has become a COVID-19 support Referral Agent

In response to a recent request from the Department of Communities' Pilbara Incident Management Team, YMAC's Hedland Office staff have offered to act as a referral agent for those members currently living in the Pilbara region who may be experiencing hardship due to COVID-19.

The department's regional office has stated:
"Individuals and families in the Pilbara may, at different times, need welfare support as a result of COVID-19. We are conscious that some people may have difficulties contacting the State Emergency Relief Hotline. To overcome this we are keen to identify organisations that have relationships in community and can refer people who may require welfare support to our Incident Management team. This will help to ensure people are able to access the support they need."

YMAC has agreed to be a referral agent to be able to help support our Pilbara-based members. This involves helping you to navigate this process such as completing forms, during the COVID-19 response.

Below is the eligibility criteria for individuals and families provided by the department for the assistance currently being provided:
•	Suffering hardship as a result of assisting their family, household or others who have been placed under home quarantine or isolation during COVID 19;
•	Not able to access essentials due to the following: age, vulnerability (e.g. sick, disability etc.), remoteness, social issues (e.g. poverty, unemployment);
•	Have no other financial means to access support, nor have access to savings, Centrelink benefits or other payments;
•	Have exhausted all other avenues of formal and informal supports;
•	Currently not self-isolating as directed by WACHS;
•	A victim of unforeseen crisis;
•	Requiring support following family and domestic violence in the absence of existing support from services (Victim or Perpetrator) (Family Violence Screening must be done);
•	Supporting eligible stranded travellers in affected areas; and/or
•	Providing care for children and dependents of deceased or seriously ill individuals.

Accessing this support is a welfare response and provides coordinated assistance for people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Should YMAC members living in the Pilbara region find themselves in need of help, as described above, please contact YMAC's Business Support Officer based in Hedland, Leaine, on 0457 311 462.

COMMUNITY ACTION
Pilbara Recov19ER group
YMAC continues to work with Pilbara Aboriginal leaders to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute to the REcov19ER website. This online resource was established for not only the Pilbara community, but others affected by the frequent changes impacting regional and remote WA.

COVID-19 Yamatj Regional Emergency Response group
YMAC is proud to be involved with the COVID-19 Yamatji Regional Emergency Response group. Chaired by Dwayne Mallard, the group involves representatives from a range of community and health organisations across the Gascoyne and Mid-West Regions, and meets regularly to identify critical needs and keep people safe in this time of state emergency.

The group meet by teleconference, sharing information and resources to assist and support each other, as well as work together in meeting with outside agencies and government about urgent and additional support. If you would like to know more, contact Chris Dann on (08) 9965 6222.

STATE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS
Relaxing of COVID-19 Restrictions
On Sunday, 10 May 2020 Premier Mark McGowan announced the State Government's roadmap to ease COVID-19 restrictions in WA, with Phase 2 coming into effect from 18 May.

Phase 2 includes encouraging West Australians to return to their workplaces, unless they are unwell or categorised as 'vulnerable'. It also includes some relaxing of travel restrictions in a staged manner. The four-phase plan was developed in conjunction with the National Cabinet framework and is based on the best health advice for Western Australia.

Phase 2 means that, from 18 May:
•	indoor and outdoor non-work gatherings will be lifted to 20 people;
•	people are encouraged to return to work, unless they are unwell or vulnerable;
•	cafés and restaurants can reopen with meal service (including within pubs, bars, clubs, hotels and casino), limited to 20 patrons and the four square metre rule applied;
•	weddings and funerals, limited to up to 20 attendees (30 for outdoor);
•	places of worship, community facilities and libraries to re-open, limited to 20 patrons;
•	community sports (non-contact) limited to 20 people;
•	outdoor or indoor fitness classes (minimal shared equipment) limited to 20 participants;
•	public swimming pools can open under strict rules (one indoor pool and one outdoor pool), limited to 20 patrons per pool.

Rgional travel restrictions will also change, bringing the number of current borders within Western Australia from 13 to only four. This will NOT include the Commonwealth Biosecurity zone and remote communities.

The new regional boundaries will allow:
•	travel between the South-West, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Perth and Peel regions;
•	travel between the Mid-West, Gascoyne and Pilbara regions (excluding Biosecurity zone);
•	travel within the Goldfields-Esperance region (excluding the Biosecurity zone);
•	travel permitted between the Kimberley local government areas (the Commonwealth's Biosecurity zone remains in place).

Western Australia's hard border with the rest of Australia will remain in place. It is expected to be the final restriction lifted. Phase 1 is already in place following the cautious relaxing of some restrictions from April 27, 2020, to allow families and friends to stay connected. Phase 3 will be finalised in the coming weeks, based on the advice from the Chief Health Officer and taking into account the infection rates across WA. It is expected Phase 3 will be implemented around four weeks from the commencement of Phase 2. Phase 4 will be assessed and finalised in due course.

More information is available here.

FEDERL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS
Federal 3-step plan to remove baseline restrictions

On Friday 8 May, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a national three step plan to relax coronavirus restrictions, with states and territories to decide when each step will be implemented locally. A breakdown of the three step roadmap talking about the different stages, what will change, and what all Australians can do to help can be found here.

COVIDSafe App - The Federal Government is encouraging everyone with a mobile phone to download this new app, that will help speed up contacting people exposed to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Signing up is voluntary. For more detailed information and download links, visit here.

HEALTH INFORMATION

- Together we can keep our mob safe and stop the spread.

- Coronavirus is a sickness that can spread from person to person.

- Coronavirus can affect everyone in our communities. It can be dangerous, especially for our Elders or people who are already unwell.

- Stay at home as much as possible. It's important to remember to stay home, stay in community.

- Keep your distance, two big steps (at least 1.5m), from other people to protect our communities.

- Where possible, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds to keep your hands clean.

- Cough or sneeze into your arm or elbow, not your hands.

- Put your tissues in the bin after you use them and wash your hands after.

- Avoid touching your face with dirty hands – especially your eyes, nose and mouth. This is where the virus can enter your body.

- Clean surfaces regularly such as tables, kitchen benches, door handles, railings as well as commonly used items such as toys, phones, keys and wallets. Use antibacterial spray or disinfectant to remove the germs.

- Information is changing regularly. Stay up to date at Australia.gov.au or follow #keepourmobsafe on social media.

The COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, the following links are useful resources to provide you with the latest information and advice to keep yourself safe:

- Australian Government: **Keep our Mob Safe, Stop The Spread** - Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on coronavirus (COVID-19) created by NIAA and Department of Health

- West Australian Government **Coronavirus 2019 Health Alert** advice for public

- World Health Organisation **Advice for Public** page

- Mental health and COVID-19 the **Think Health WA** has useful information on managing mental health during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

From everyone at YMAC, we hope you stay safe and well during this time.

CONTACT US:

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