



22 June 2020

Hello,

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

It is very pleasing that Australia continues to experience low infection numbers, to the extent that both the Federal and State Government have announced a further easing of restrictions – see more about this below.

It is important to remember that there is still no vaccine. Government continues to remind us that 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 has developed procedures to guide staff as we resume external face to face meetings.

Our aim has been to ensure we minimise health risks to members, clients and staff – particularly those classified as vulnerable - as WA enters phase 3 of the State Government COVID-19 coronavirus: WA Roadmap.

Parts of Phase 3 of the State Government response (current from 6 June) most relevant to YMAC and our day to day business are:-

- Meeting capacity increasing from 20 people to 100 or 300 per gathering (depending on the venue).
- The person-to-space ratio changing from 4m<sup>2</sup> to 2m<sup>2</sup>.
- Regional travel permitted, including to the Kimberley region

## **YMAC Office closures – Phase 3 changes**

YMAC staff are now working between their office and home. For the time being we will continue to keep offices closed to visitors. This decision will be reviewed early July, and has been made in accordance with government health guidelines to reduce risk to vulnerable people, and remaining cautious with onset of the flu season.

### **Need to see a YMAC staff member?**

We appreciate some people may need to see a YMAC staff member in person. If so, please contact them through their phone or email (or call the relevant office), to arrange an offsite meeting.

### **Group and face to face meetings**

YMAC has developed procedures to guide staff in arranging meetings – whether this be in person, by telephone, online, or a combination of all three. These will guide our coordination of meetings with Traditional Owner groups, now that restrictions have lifted.

All YMAC staff are all looking forward to resuming – where possible - external face to face meetings with clients, as well as undertaking regional travel. This includes undertaking fieldwork on Country.

## **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.

### **RECOV19ER Teleconference Schedule**

You can participate in the calls on the following days and times:

- Community Representatives Input - Wednesdays at 11:30am, and
- Government Department and Agency Updates - Thursdays at 11:30am

Contact: [info@recov19er.com.au](mailto:info@recov19er.com.au)

## STATE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Regional travel restrictions to be lifted as part of WA Roadmap

On 5 June the biosecurity restrictions on travel to the Kimberley, Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku and parts of the East Pilbara were lifted as part of the WA roadmap

This means that tourists and travellers will now be permitted to travel into these areas. However, access to remote Aboriginal communities remains closed to protect the health and wellbeing of residents.

There are still restrictions on Aboriginal communities because health authorities have advised that Aboriginal people - especially those living remotely - have a higher risk of getting sick from the coronavirus than other Western Australians.

This means that while visitors can travel into these areas, people still need an entry permit to go onto some Aboriginal Lands Trust reserves. \*Entry permits are still required under the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972 to access Kiwirrkurra, Jigalong and most of the Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku.

More information can be found on the WA State Government website [here](#).

### Relaxing of COVID-19 Restrictions

Phase 3 of COVID-19 roadmap commenced from Saturday, 6 June, following success in limiting community transmission of COVID-19 in WA during Phase 2.

This move made WA the first State to remove the four square metre rule, replacing it with a two square metre rule for indoor and outdoor venues, allowing more people to return to their workplaces and social activities. The non-work gatherings limit has lifted to 100 people, with up to 300 people in some settings.

More information is available at [www.wa.gov.au](http://www.wa.gov.au)

### COVID-19 State Recovery Advisory Group update

The State has established a top-level State Recovery Advisory Group to help lead Western Australia's recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State Recovery Advisory Group includes representatives from business, industry, not-for-profit organisations, UnionsWA, the public sector, local government and the community.

The group's advice will help to guide the development of the State Recovery Plan. A draft Impact Statement is to be released to address each of the State's recovery areas - health, economic and infrastructure, social, industry and regional WA.

McGowan Government Ministers are also hosting a series of roundtable discussions over the next fortnight that will include key stakeholders in areas such as health and mental health, tourism, seniors and ageing, the disability sector, Aboriginal wellbeing, culture and the arts, education and training, and regional communities.

The community is also able to contribute ideas through iThink (WA Public Sector) at [ithink.wa.gov.au](http://ithink.wa.gov.au). Find out more information at <http://www.wa.gov.au>

## HEALTH INFORMATION

### Keeping community safe and healthy

Even though transmission of the virus in WA is currently under control, it's important we keep it that way. Stay safe and healthy by:

- avoiding touching people as much as possible, especially if they are sick
- stay two big steps apart from other people
- keep your hands clean and cover your coughs and sneezes
- if people in your community are unwell, they should stay home and call the local health clinic immediately.

Together we can keep our mob safe and stop the spread. Information is changing regularly. Stay up to date at [Australia.gov.au](http://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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[www.ymac.org.au](http://www.ymac.org.au) [www.recov19er.com.au](http://www.recov19er.com.au)