COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and SA Designated Areas

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs # 3)
Please note: This information is for people living in South Australian Aboriginal communities declared Designated Areas under the Commonwealth Biosecurity Act 2015

1. What is happening about remote and regional Aboriginal communities in South Australia?

Seven remote and regional Aboriginal communities in South Australia are now declared Designated Areas under the Biosecurity Act 2015. As a result, there are restrictions on entry to:

- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands
- Davenport (near Port Augusta)
- Gerard (Riverland)
- Point Pearce (Yorke Peninsula)
- Nepabunna (excluding Iga Warta)
- Maralinga Tjarutja (MT) Lands
- Yalata (Far West Coast)

As a consequence of amendments to the Biosecurity Act 2015 Coronavirus Determination on 24 April 2020, two other South Australian communities that were previously included – Yarilena homeland (outside Ceduna) and Dunjiba (outskirts of Oodnadatta) – are no longer Designated Areas.

Anyone wishing to enter a designated community (including residents) must self-isolate for 14 days before they can do so, and seek approval via an exemption process (see 2. below). Entry will not be granted if a person shows signs of Coronavirus, has been in contact with anyone known to have the virus, or has been overseas within the preceding two weeks.

2. Why is all this happening?

No-one knew that Coronavirus was coming and the impact it would have. Many Aboriginal people including Elders are sicker and live in more overcrowded conditions than other Australians, and this places them at more risk. The biosecurity measures are extra steps designed to keep people safe, even if it changes their way of life for now.

3. Who is making decisions about what happens in Designated Areas communities? Who can I ask for more information?
There are nominated Local Community Contacts (LCCs) for all Designated Areas, and they are working with identified senior police representatives called Regional Decision Makers (RDMs) who will decide how to handle things.

The LCC Leads for South Australian Designated Areas are:

- **APY Lands**: Richard King (General Manager), 0401 124 876 or 8956 2868, email gm@anangu.com.au
- **Davenport**: Lavene Ngatokorua (CEO), 0498 165 147 or 8642 2433, email lavene@davenportcommunity.com.au
- **Gerard**: Kingsley Abdulla (Chair, Gerard Community Council Aboriginal Corp), 0402 805 256 or 8583 7304, email king026@activ8.net.au
- **Point Pearce**: Eddie Newchurch (Chair, Point Pearce Aboriginal Corp), 0457 282 075 or 8871 7059, email eddieneewchurch@gmail.com
- **Nepabunna** (excluding Iga Warta): Ian Johnson (Chair, Nipapanha Community Aboriginal Corp), 8648 4624, email dwilton675@gmail.com and Gerard Lessells (Ranger Coordinator), 0474 221 559, email rard@live.com.au
- **MT Lands**: Sharon Yendall (General Manager), 0437 253 210 or Oak Valley Office 8670 4214 or Ceduna Office 8625 2946, email Sharon.yendall@maralinga.com.au
- **Yalata**: David White (CEO), 0477 900 161 or 8625 6040, email ceo@yalata.com.au

4. **Are there any exceptions to the new rules?**

There are some people who may be exempted from the new rules but only if they are carrying out their essential service duties in an urgent situation or have obtained approval from a Human Biosecurity Officer (HBO). These are personnel involved in: policing; health care; education; domestic and family violence; child protection; local government services (rubbish collection); Centrelink services, benefits, programs or facilities; correctional services; funeral services; conducting or taking part in court or tribunal sittings; gas, water, telecommunications; food, fuel, mail delivery; housing and/or transport infrastructure where projects were already underway before the outbreak; and freight transport to and from areas.

If the requirements around urgency or approval by an HBO are met, these people may enter a Designated Area. However, they must liaise with the LCCs, follow any conditions approved by the HBO, and follow safe practices, keeping away from community members to keep everyone safe.

If the requirements around urgency or approval by an HBO are not met, these people must self-isolate for 14 days before they can enter the designated community, and seek approval (as per above). Again, entry will not be granted if a person shows signs of
Coronavirus, has been in contact with anyone known to have the virus, or has been overseas within the preceding two weeks.

5. **What should I do if I want to leave a Designated Area community and then come back in?**

   - You should stay in your home unless it is unsafe.
   - If you wish to seek approval for very urgent things like medical appointments, tell your LCC who’ll discuss your request with the RDM. **You will not be able to come straight back in unless you have this approval.**
   - If you feel unwell with a high temperature or a dry cough, stay away from other people in your house and call your local clinic or the COVID-19 SA Health Hotline on **1800 253 787** (open 8am to 8pm) or the National Coronavirus Info Line, **1800 020 080** (24 hours).
   - If you do leave but don’t have approval to come back in, you will need to stay somewhere else and isolate by yourself, and not show any symptoms for 14 days before you can return (see more information below).

6. **Where can I stay if I have to isolate outside my community? Who will pay for this?**

   Specific isolation places are being identified for all Designated Areas. However, you should talk to your LCC about accessing these **before leaving your community** and/or call the SA Housing Hotline on **1300 705 336** or email housingrelief@sa.gov.au.

7. **How do I prove that I have isolated for 14 days before I come back to my community?**

   Self-isolation will be validated through questioning from the RDM. You should advise the RDM and your LCC at the commencement of the 14 day self-isolation period to assist in this validation process.

8. **What about food supplies to Designated Areas?**

   - With the exception of a few items like toilet paper and hand sanitiser, there is little or no shortage of food and other supplies throughout the country. However, there are some challenges related to distribution and delivery, and these are being worked through.
   - If your community has a local shop, go there to purchase essential food and other items (and follow their instructions for hygiene practices, social distancing etc).
• If your community does not have a local shop, talk to your LCC about arrangements being put in place in your community.
• If you or a family member has access to the Internet, you may be able to arrange delivery from supermarkets and other providers. But remember, some items will be unavailable and there may be restrictions on how many you can buy of particular items – as well as particular arrangements for drop-offs, through your LCC.

9. **What should I do if I have a medical appointment?**
   • You may be able to do medical appointments via the phone. Talk to your local clinic or doctor about this.
   • If you need to go outside the community for a medical appointment, speak with your LCC who can help you seek approval from the RDM. If you are granted exemption, it is important that you only go to the visit as arranged and minimise your contact with other people.

10. **What’s happening with mail services to Designated Areas?**
    Discussions are occurring with Australia Post regarding delivery of normal mail and possibly other important items like prescriptions. Talk to your LCC about these arrangements.

11. **What about signage in Designated Areas?**
    • Road signs are being erected in and around Designated Areas. Please comply with them.
    • Public Notices should already be displayed around and distributed within Designated Areas. Please comply with them.
    • NOTE: Aboriginal communities that are not Designated Areas can still create their own signage, under the authority of the local community council.

12. **What are the rules around funerals?**
    Because of Coronavirus, currently funerals can have no more than 10 people at them if held inside a building, and 15 people if held outside (in the open). Sadly, you shouldn’t be leaving and travelling to other communities or towns for a funeral at the moment. If you have further queries on this, talk to your LCC who will liaise with the RDM.

13. **I’m healthy but I don’t feel safe in my house, what can I do?**
If you’re in good health but don’t feel safe, you should talk to the police about what is happening in your house.

14. **I have family in town, can I go and stay with them?**

You should stay home unless it is unsafe. If you leave to go and stay with family, you won’t be able to return to community unless you isolate for 14 days, are well, and receive approval to return.

15. **What should happen if I become unwell?**

If you become unwell, try to stay away from people in your house and be especially sure to practise good hygiene. If you believe you have Coronavirus symptoms, call your local clinic or the COVID-19 SA Health Hotline on 1800 253 787 (open 8am to 8pm) or the National Coronavirus Info Line, 1800 020 080 (24 hours). If possible, self-isolate in a location identified by your LCC while awaiting further medical advice.

16. **Can I still get urgent maintenance done on my house?**

Yes, essential maintenance and services can come into community to do work but will liaise with the RDM (in consultation with LCCs to determine if it is urgent. If they do receive approval, they will still try and keep away from community members to keep community members safe.

17. **What is biosecurity?**

Biosecurity is the way that governments prevent, respond to and recover from human diseases and environmental hazards that threaten the economy, environment, and people.

**For further COVID-19 Information:**

- Call the COVID-19 SA Health Hotline on 1800 253 787 (open 8am to 8pm)
- Call the National Coronavirus Info Line, 1800 020 080 (24 hours).