

Welcome to the NTCOSS Sector Update 25 March 2020



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## COVID-19 Sector Update 25 March

### UPDATES AND NEW INFORMATION

#### New Travel Restrictions

New NT border controls are now in place. The new border controls came into force at 4pm on Tuesday 24 March. Everyone arriving in the NT must be quarantined for 14 days, except for special exemptions. Groups that have been identified as exempt from the border controls include:

- national and Northern Territory security and governance
- health and emergency services
- transport, freight and logistics
- defence and policing
- flight crews and freight – with strict guidelines in place to monitor and manage this
- people with specialist skills that are critical to maintaining key government services, industries or businesses.

For a full explanation of the new border controls including who is exempt, how to apply for an exemption, moving through the territory and finding accommodation, visit <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/community-advice/border-controls>

**I urge you to read all these regulations so you are clear about what this means for your service delivery.**

#### Essential Services

The classification of services as essential or non-essential has been one of the most complicated processes so far and one that has resulted in the most enquiries from the public and the social and community services sector. Here's what we know so far.

We are seeking clarification on this definition. **If you are not sure about whether or not you are an "essential service" please send an email to [deborah@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:deborah@ntcoss.org.au)** and I can direct this to government on your behalf. The umbrella definition is whether or not your service is required to keep a community functioning.

We all need to look after staff as well as clients – vulnerable staff members (those with health conditions) should be working from home and/or not providing face to face services.

Please note that even when a service is considered essential and is continuing to operate, any member of staff who can provide service via telephone or remotely should to minimise contact.

**Listed below is the latest information from the Northern Territory Government about which services are essential, which can also be found at the [Secure NT website](#):**

- Airports – normal and necessary business.
- Public transport including ridesharing and associated facilities such as bus stops, taxi ranks and interchanges.
- Medical and health service facilities – normal and necessary business.
- Disability and aged care facilities – normal and necessary business. Other special measures and restrictions are in place to manage risk.
- Prisons, youth justice, correctional facilities and other custody facilities.
- Courts and tribunals.
- Parliament – for normal operations.
- Food markets, grocery stores, retail and shopping centres that is necessary for the normal business of those premises.
- Petrol stations, service stations and truck stops.
- Mining sites/camps, office buildings, factories and construction sites - for normal operations.
- Schools, universities, educational institutions and childcare facilities - for normal business.
- Hotel/motel accommodation – for normal operation of accommodation services.
- Libraries - books can be borrowed and returned on a 'takeaway' basis.

**Closures - shops, events, services and mass gatherings information**

From midnight Wednesday 25 March, apply to events and gatherings. Please follow the link above to find out information from the NT Government including what is already closed and what will be closed from midday on Wednesday 25 March.

For all new restrictions visit the relevant NT Secure page by following this [link](#).

**NT Correctional Services is suspending all social visits to prisoners from Wednesday 25 March 2020** at the Darwin and Alice Springs Correctional Centres and the work camps at Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy. For more information see the announcement [here](#).

### **Funding and grant arrangements for not-for-profits in the NT**

#### **NTG Grants and funding – contractual obligations update**

Department of Chief Minister (DCM) has advised that they are developing a formal position on grants and funding arrangements over the coming weeks. **DCM has advised that organisations should take all reasonable decisions focused on protecting their employees and the people they serve from the COVID-19 spread.** In the event those decisions vary the grant funding or fee for service arrangement, **NGOs will not be penalised as a result of those decisions.**

DCM is working to get this formal communication to services but is comfortable with me communicating this to each of you.

### **Centrelink Assistance**

If you already receive Newstart or another payment, you do not need to contact Centrelink to get the extra support announced – it will be paid automatically to eligible recipients fortnightly, upon its commencement.

#### **For those who need to apply for the payment urgently:**

- **Online:** If you have digital access, try applying online through MyGov. Try again later if you cannot get through.
- The government has enacted Intent to Claim processes so people don't have to lodge a full claim immediately, and they will be back paid to the day they lodged their intent to claim. In other words, people won't miss out on income support because of delays to lodge a completed claim.
- **Phone:** We know many people do not have online access. The phone number for Jobseeker Payment is **132 850**.
- **In person:** If you do decide to line up, please practice social distancing.

Centrelink has lines for Indigenous Services (1800 136 380) and Multilingual Calls (131 202).

Centrelink has Interpreter and translation services in over 200 languages. This includes Auslan or sign language, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages, international languages. Ask us for an interpreter when you [call](#) or [visit online](#).

Please follow the links for more information on the [Coronavirus Supplement](#) and [\\$750 support](#)

[payments.](#)

NTCOSS will advise the sector if this information changes.

### **Community Development Program (CDP)**

The CDP will be suspended while the Bio Security Act is in place, beginning on March 23. For more information, visit [here](#).

### **Not-for-profits – Stimulus measures from NT Government and Federal Government**

#### **NT Government Stimulus: \$5 million for not-for-profit and community organisations**

The Northern Territory Government has announced a round of stimulus measures today as part of its \$65 million *Jobs Rescue & Recovery Plan*. Read the full [media release](#) here.

**Not-for-profit organisations will be eligible for a payment of up to \$100,000** linked to the tax they withhold from their employee's salary and wages, with a minimum payment of \$20,000. We have been advised that this payment will arrive automatically if your not-for-profit meets the eligibility criteria. For more information about the payments, please see the [Treasury press release](#).

### **Testing for COVID-19 Update**

There will be updates to the testing criteria for COVID-19 this week.

The most accurate and up to date advice about COVID-19, including testing guidelines can be found [here](#).

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Update**

The Northern Territory Government is aware that there is a shortage of PPE among services in the Northern Territory.

It has been advised that for access to PPE from the stockpile can be requested by email to [Stockpile.Ops@health.gov.au](mailto:Stockpile.Ops@health.gov.au) subject to a number of triage conditions:

Requesting parties will be asked to demonstrate that:

- they have been unable to source masks through the open market
- existing stocks have been depleted
- who the requested masks are intended for
- how the masks are to be prioritised and distributed in order to minimise transmission to greatest effect
- how previous Stockpile stocks (if applicable) have been used efficiently and effectively.

**Visit the NTCOSS website and follow us on Twitter and Facebook**

**How to get the latest COVID-19 news, relevant to you:**

NTCOSS is providing updates, announcements and resources most relevant to the social and community services sector through our [website](#). Please visit our dedicated [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information](#) page for more information or sign up to our sector updates by visiting the website.

**We are also constantly sending news, updates and announcements through our [Twitter](#) feed and [Facebook](#) page. Follow the links provided and follow us to get updates straight to your news feed.**

**Critical resources**

[Secure NT](#) – Please follow this link for the most up to date information from the Northern Territory Government regarding [coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) including For Australia-wide information visit <https://www.health.gov.au/> and for global information visit the World Health Organisation at <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>. There are several hotlines including:

- 1800 020 080 – National COVID-19 hotline number
- 1800 008 002 – Northern Territory COVID-19 hotline number
- 1800 518 189 – Remote Services Hotline

**Additional resources**

[Australian Government Department of Business](#) - Information and support for business, financial assistance, eligibility and timing for the new government support for Australian businesses.

[Australian Government Treasury Department](#) - Information for individuals and households, small to medium enterprises (SME's), not for profits (NFP's) and sole traders.

[ATO Website](#) - Information about tax support to assist businesses (including sole traders) experiencing financial difficulty as a result of COVID-19.

[The Funding Centre](#) - Information specifically for not for profits requiring financial assistance.

[Immediate Works Grant](#) - Grants for Territory not-for-profit and community organisations to engage local businesses to do repairs, renovations and upgrades to their property and facilities (permanent physical improvements to land and / or buildings).

Information about workers' rights during the coronavirus crisis: <https://www.actu.org.au/coronavirus>

Information for older

people: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-older-australians>

Thanks for all the support and collaboration you have all offered so far, let's keep working hard together and keep being kind to each other.

**Deborah Di Natale**  
**NTCOSS CEO**

[Click Here for more COVID-19 Advice and Resources](#)

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### **Updates from the Sector & Resources**

#### **FACT SHEET: Income Support Payments for Individuals**

The Government is temporarily expanding eligibility to income support payments and establishing a new, time-limited Coronavirus supplement to be paid at a rate of \$550 per fortnight. This supplement will be paid to both existing and new recipients of the eligible payment categories. These changes will apply for the next six months. Read and download the full factsheet [here](#).

#### **UPDATE: Changes to Service Delivery - Amity Community Services**

From Wednesday 25th March, in line with current guidelines, and to promote the health of clients, Amity Community Services will be suspending direct client and stakeholder contact to limit the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus). This means **counselling services will continue and now be provided via telephone or video call options only**. People with existing appointments will be contacted. For all people in our community who are thinking about connecting with Amity, **please do** as services are still being provided.

Amity continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and review the way they work based on the advice of the World Health Organisation, Australian Government Department of

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Health and Australia's Chief Medical Officer. During this time, Amity remain committed to providing services for people in the community. Please connect.

Phone: (08) 89446565

Email: [habitwise@amity.org.au](mailto:habitwise@amity.org.au)

**UPDATE: Changes to Strong Steps Services in response to COVID-19**

Strong Steps is working hard to ensure that they continue to support people in their community while also taking precautions to protect the health of clients, staff and the wider community. To assist with this, Strong Steps will be delivering all **counselling sessions via telephone or video call from 25 March 2020** until further notice.

Please call (08) 8983 3413 to discuss these changes. If you are a current client, Strong Steps staff will be in contact to help you transition to phone or video counselling. During this time Strong Steps remain committed to providing Strong Steps Counselling services to the Northern Territory.

**RESOURCES: EASA Services and Downloadable Resources**

EASA and CORP would like to inform that they are operating normal business hours. At present, they are still offering face-to-face sessions for clients who meet COVID-19 screening criteria. In the event that a client does not meet the COVID-19 screening criteria, services are offered via telephone and video-conferencing platforms. EASA are ensuring that all of the face-to-face services are adhering to current social distances requirements and additional cleaning of all high contact surfaces has been undertaken. Contact EASA [here](#).

EASA have also prepared the following tip sheets, available for download:

- [Calming Corona Concerns](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Sleep Difficulties](#)
- [Stress](#)

**UPDATE: COVID-19 and Working in the Aged Care Sector**

This [document](#) contains updates regarding ordering PPE supplies for the aged care sector, eLearning modules for Aged Care Workers, advice on visit guidelines, and mental health resources

**WEBINAR: Home Care and COVID-19**

This [webinar](#) focused on the role and capacity of home care providers, Community Home

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Support Programme providers and the assessment workforce as part of the national response to COVID-19.

**RESOURCE: Grant Writing and COVID-19 Response Support**

Nous Group, an Australian management consultancy firm with Darwin based team, is offering COVID-19 response support, including discounted grant writing to assist organisations and sectors to access the support they need. Nous has extensive experience in Human Services and Sector Support. For further information please contact the Darwin Office Lead Emma White on 0427 449 186 or [Emma.White@nousgroup.com.au](mailto:Emma.White@nousgroup.com.au)

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**Past eBulletins**

Access past eBulletins here:

[NTCOSS eBulletin 19 March 2020](#)

[NTCOSS COVID-19 Sector Update 23 March 2020](#)

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NTCOSS is a not for profit, member based, peak body for the social and community services sector in the Northern Territory. We're an advocate for social justice on behalf of people and communities in the NT, who may be affected by poverty and disadvantage.

NTCOSS acknowledges that we work on the land of the First Peoples of the Northern Territory and respect their continuing cultural connections as traditional owners of this country.

The NTCOSS eBulletin is delivered to your inbox every Thursday afternoon. We welcome submissions and encourage you to forward to interested contacts and friends.

Don't forget to check out the NTCOSS website and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

**Submit an item to eBulletin**

To contribute notices to our weekly eBulletin, please email your information in the body of an email or as a Word document to [admin@ntcoss.org.au](mailto:admin@ntcoss.org.au)

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Please ensure your contribution is in line with [NTCOSS guidelines](#) and includes all appropriate dates, times, links and contact details.

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NTCOSS thanks HESTA for their ongoing support of this publication



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