



Keeping remote Indigenous communities safe

Update 5 – 27 May 2020

Context

The MCA is pleased to share its fifth *Keeping remote Indigenous communities safe* update.

These bulletins provide an update on how the minerals industry is working to support community-led approaches in partner remote communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Past bulletins are available at <https://minerals.org.au/communities>.

Celebrating Reconciliation Week 2020

At 12 noon today the MCA joined thousands of people and organisations on social media acknowledging and showing respect to Country as part of the launch of [National Reconciliation Week 2020](#).

For the minerals industry, NRW 2020 is an opportunity to acknowledge the immense contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the sector as well as shared partnerships and activities.

The industry will celebrate this year's theme of 'All in this together' using social media, webinars, special site menus and other innovative ways, recognising that usual activities on site and in the community are limited.

The MCA will profile activities on its Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages.

Preparing for the gradual lifting of remote area restrictions

The minerals industry continues to approach the gradual lifting of public health restrictions with vigilance and caution, recognising its ongoing responsibility to keep workers, families and communities safe.

Stringent health and hygiene measures will be maintained as biosecurity zones are lifted in the [Northern Territory](#) and likely [Western Australia](#) on 5 June.

The industry's approach is consistent with the National Resources Sector COVID-19 Protocols, including:

- Complying with public health advice and local measures, including state and territory arrangements, land council and pandemic disaster management committee arrangements
- Maintaining health and hygiene protocols including:
 - site health and hygiene plans
 - arrangements for a fast response if a case is suspected on site or a partner community
- Minimising travel to workers essential to maintain safe production, maintenance and ancillary activities
- Developing engagement arrangements with specific communities and stakeholder groups, considering public health advice, local risks and preferences and other factors
- Engaging vulnerable workers to develop shared return-to-work plans that reflect individual, family and community health risks and other factors
- Contributing to internal business planning and local pandemic responses, including adjustment of local measures.



On 14 May the MCA released the [COVID Safe: Minerals industry remote communities engagement transition framework](#) to assist with this planning.

As part of the industry's ongoing vigilance, the MCA prepared a [guide](#) for companies and sites using the resources to support industry planning and engagement with remote communities during the pandemic.

The MCA COVID-19 Communities [webpage](#) was also refreshed to make it easier to find and use resources.

New DETECT Project to undertake wide-scale asymptomatic testing of FIFO workers

The Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia, the peak body for the state's resources sector, has established a COVID-19 Resources Research Fund to [support](#) the Western Australian Government's FIFO DETECT Project.

CME members have contributed more than \$500,000 to the study, which will assist to identify prevalence in different cohorts, validate testing measures and inform medical research. The project involves testing of target cohorts that travel for work, including health care workers, police, teachers, students and mining workers.

Snapshot: Supporting community-led responses in remote and regional communities

Every day new examples are added to the register of company contributions on the MCA COVID19 Communities [webpage](#). Recent examples include:

- [Rio Tinto](#) is contributing \$500,000 to CareFlight Northern Operations to support COVID-19 emergency care in the Northern Territory
- [Newmont](#) has contributed \$50,000 to Foodbank Northern Territory and \$25,000 to the Charles Darwin University Food Parcel Program. [Newmont](#) also supports various organisations including the Boddington Hospital Auxiliary, Foodbank WA, Lifeline WA and Williams and Boddington Community Resource Centres. Newmont team members volunteered time to help pack food hampers
- BHP's [Vital Resources Fund](#) has contributed support for Bega Gambirringu Health Services to deliver social services and Bloodwood Tree Association to meet an increase in food demand
- Newcrest Cadia Valley donated refurbished laptops and tablets to CentaCare's DOTPOINT Family Mentoring Program to assist Aboriginal families in Orange, New South Wales.

Next steps

The minerals industry will maintain its focus on keeping workers, families and communities safe. This will include adjusting approaches in consultation with partner communities, workers and other stakeholders.