



Supporting remote communities during COVID-19

Update 9 – 30 September 2020

Context

This update provides an overview of site-based arrangements to keep remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory safe from COVID-19. It also highlights a number of MCA partnerships.

Northern Territory arrangements in focus

In September the MCA asked mining companies operating in the Northern Territory for an update on site-based COVID-19 health, hygiene and community protocols. This is an additional to mandatory quarantine for workers travelling to work from identified hot spots.

Based on responses from and ongoing engagement with five major mines, the MCA understands the following arrangements are generally in place across the Northern Territory industry:

- **COVID-19 Management Plans:** sites are maintaining COVID-19 Management Plans based on requirements under the Commonwealth Biosecurity Determination and consistent with the National Resources Sector COVID-19 Protocols
- **Stringent procedures:** plans include procedures for flexible work to minimise travel to site, changed work, accommodation and catering practices to enable physical distancing, health and hygiene monitoring, cleaning and other measures
- **Fitness for work:** all workers are temperature tested and must complete a fitness for work declaration prior to travel. Workers displaying any potential cold or flu symptoms are advised not to attend work. On-site arrangements are in place for quarantine, testing and contact tracing if individuals begin to display any symptoms while on roster
- **Reducing on-site workforces where safe to do so:** non-essential travel to mine sites continues to be deferred to reduce risk. Essential travel can be required for specialists to undertake maintenance and other activities for safety and environmental management
- **Ceasing non-essential community travel in consultation with communities:** as required by some land councils and/or host communities, in-person engagement or travel to remote communities was or continues to be suspended in some locations. In some circumstances, sites have been asked to not provide direct community assistance (e.g. fuel, repairs and assistance) to avoid any inadvertent contact. Emergency support can be provided if necessary under strict procedures
- **Staying connected:** while in-person contact is restricted, companies are maintaining engagement through radio, newsletters, teleconferences and video conferences and social media. This is essential to maintaining strong relationships and shared health vigilance
- **Supporting community-led responses:** financial and in-kind support for community, health and economic resilience activities is continuing.

The MCA will continue to support and monitor site-specific arrangements throughout the pandemic.



Supporting a coordinated and responsible national approach to people movement

The MCA supports stringent health, hygiene and community protocols to keep workers, families and communities safe from COVID-19 based on official public health advice.

As part of its ongoing commitment to worker and family health and wellbeing, the minerals industry is concerned about the amount of time some workers that must travel for work are spending separated from families when unable to quarantine at home under stringent conditions.

The MCA continues to seek a consistent, coordinated national framework that establishes robust processes to protect community health and worker and family health and wellbeing.

Highlighting MCA partnerships

The MCA is [proud to partner](#) with a range of organisations to support workforce health, safety and wellbeing, regional and remote communities and expanding social and economic opportunity for Indigenous Australians.

Partners include:

- **MATES in Mining** – a suicide prevention initiative tailored specifically for the mining industry
- **National Aboriginal Press Club** – a new initiative to offer a First Nations voice on a wide range of critical issues. The MCA's support is consistent with the industry's promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices
- **Clontarf Foundation** – a program supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and boys to achieve their goals through tailored support
- **Stars Foundation** – a program supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls to achieve their goals through tailored support
- **Indigenous Engineering School** – a week-long science, technology, engineering and maths camp to encourage 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high students to pursue STEM careers
- **Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia** – the MCA works with PCFA to raise awareness of prostate cancer among the minerals industry's 240,000 strong workforce and their families and communities.