



THE TORRES STRAIT LOCAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT GROUP



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

28th March 2020

TORRES STRAIT & NORTHERN PENINSULA AREA UPDATED REGIONAL TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS FOR COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PANDEMIC

Both the isolation and remoteness of communities located within the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula regional footprint offers a unique opportunity to delay or potentially prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Whilst at the State level the focus has moved to transmission reduction, the paramount focus of the Torres Strait Local Disaster Management Group (TSLDMG) remains prevention of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) from entering the region.

In response to the pandemic and during its extraordinary meeting of 23/03/20, the Torres Strait Local Disaster Management Group (TSLDMG) enacted initial regional travel restrictions and community protection measures. The TSLDMG also continued dialogue with the relevant Commonwealth and State Departments and Agencies, to deliver greater protection initiatives for communities located within the Local Government Areas of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC), Torres Shire Council (TSC), and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council (NPARC).

At 11:59pm, last Thursday 26/03/20, restrictions for travel to remote areas to protect community members from the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic came into effect. Under this measure, States and Territories nominated areas in consultation with Indigenous communities, and an emergency requirement determined under the Biosecurity Act 2015 to restrict persons from entering those nominated areas.

The emergency requirement also allows jurisdictions to nominate a decision maker who will be empowered to permit additional classes of people to enter or leave the community in certain circumstances. Consistent with Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) guidance, individuals will be required to undergo a minimum period of isolation (currently 14 days) before entry or re-entry into the area will be allowed. Self-isolation must also be to the confidence of the Human Biosecurity Officer.

The TSLDMG has had to work swiftly to ensure local compliance of the new restriction measures, whilst working with and accommodating families that have been, and potentially could be, affected by this arrangement.

This has resulted in the following resolutions being made, and moved, at the LDMG's extraordinary meeting yesterday (27/03/20):

Resolution One:

That TSLDMG resolutions to revoke Resolutions 1, 2, and 3 made at the TSLDMG and the NPALDMG Extraordinary Meeting on 23 March 2020.

Resolution Two:

That the TSLDMG and the NPALDMG notes the effect of the Determination made at 1159 hrs on 26 March 2020, by the Commonwealth Minister for Health, the Honourable Greg Hunt, (duly signed by instrument), namely, the Biosecurity (Human Biosecurity Emergency) (Human Coronavirus with Pandemic Potential) (Emergency Requirements for Remote Communities) Determination 2020 (the Determination) that a person must remain outside the designated areas of Torres and/or Torres Strait Island and/or Norther Peninsula Area unless the person meets the following requirements under clause 5 of the Determination:

1. (a.) the person is entering the area to escape an immediate threat to the person's life; or
(b.) the person is a member of the Australian Defence Force and is entering the area in the course of the member's duty; or
(c.) all of the following apply to the person entering the area:
 - i. immediately before the entry, the person does not have any of the signs or symptoms of human coronavirus with pandemic potential;
 - ii. in the 14 days immediately before the entry, the person has not been outside Australian territory;
 - iii. the person is not entering the area wholly or partly for the purpose of engaging in an activity in the area that is prohibited by or under an Australian law;
 - iv. the person's entry to the area is not prohibited by or under an Australian law (other than this section);
 - v. at least one of subsections (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) applies to the person.
2. This subsection applies to a person entering a designated area if, throughout the 14 days before entering, the person:
 - (a.) has been isolated from the general public; and
 - (b.) has not had any signs or symptoms of human coronavirus with pandemic potential; and
 - (c.) has not been exposed to:
 - i. human coronavirus with pandemic potential; or
 - ii. another person with one or more signs or symptoms of human coronavirus with pandemic potential.

Person is entering area to engage in, or provide transport for, essential activity

3. This subsection applies to a person entering a designated area if:
 - (a.) the person is entering the area primarily to engage in an essential activity in the area that requires the person to be in the area; or
 - (b.) the person is the person in charge of, or a member of the crew of, a conveyance entering the area primarily to transport one or more persons described in paragraph (a.).

Person has permission to enter area

4. This subsection applies to a person entering a designated area if there is in force permission for the person to enter the area given by a relevant decision maker for the area who:
 - (a.) is a chief human biosecurity officer or a human biosecurity officer; or
 - (b.) has had regard to any guidance from a human biosecurity officer about who should be allowed to enter the area.

Person is in transit through area

5. This subsection applies to a person entering a designated area on a journey that:
- (a.) is to a place beyond the area; and
 - (b.) is by the most direct practicable route through the area; and
 - (c.) does not involve stopping in the area at:
 - i. a place where there is anyone other than the person and persons who travelled with the person to the place; or
 - ii. a place likely to be visited or occupied by anyone other than the person and persons who travelled with the person to the place.

Person is crossing water between designated areas or parts of designated area

6. This section applies to a person entering a designated area (the end area) on a journey for which the following conditions are met:
- (a.) the journey started in a designated area (the start area) that the person did not enter in contravention of subsection (1), whether the start area is the same as, or different from, the end area;
 - (b.) the journey was directly from the start area to the end area;
 - (c.) the journey was to or from an island;
 - (d.) the whole journey used a single vessel or aircraft.

And, accordingly, the TSLDMG and the NPALDMG adopts and implements the effect of the Determination by permit to be issued by the Chairperson of the TSLDMG and the NPALDMG respectively, being the duly authorised officers under the Determination.

Resolution Three:

That the TSLDMG and the NPALDMG declares and adopts the respective forms of the permit at attachments A and B hereto.

Regional Entry & Declaration Documentation:

<p>Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) <i>Online Entry Form:</i> www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/submit-entry-documentation-online</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boigu (Talbot) Island• Dauan (Mt Cornwallis) Island• Saibai Island• Mabuiag (Jervis) Island• Badu (Mulgrave) Island• Arkai (Kubin) Community at Moa Island• Wug (St Pauls) Community at Moa Island• Kirirri (Hammond) Island• Iama (Yam) Island• Warraber (Sue) Island• Poruma (Coconut) Island• Masig (Yorke) Island• Ugar (Stephen) Island• Erub (Darnley) Island• Mer (Murray) Island
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<p>Torres Shire Council (TSC) <i>Online Entry Form:</i> http://www.torres.qld.gov.au/covid-19/register</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday Island (Waiben) • Horn Island (Ngurupai) • Prince of Wales Island (Muralag) • Friday Island (Gealug Island)
<p>Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council (NPARC) <i>Online Entry Form:</i> www.nparc.qld.gov.au/council-information/npa-access-application/1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seisia • New Mapoon • Bamaga • Umagico • Injinoo

Recommended Health Information Sources:

Queensland Health

- Call 13 HEALTH (13 432584) or visit: www.health.qld.gov.au/coronavirus

Australian Department of Health

- Visit: www.health.gov.au
- National Coronavirus Helpline - Call 1800 020 080 (Available 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week)

Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service

- Visit: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/torres-cape>

- ENDS -

Media Enquires:

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