Roadmap to easing access restrictions for Queensland’s remote communities

A progressive approach to sustainable COVID-19 risk management including for Queensland’s remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

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Entry to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (‘designated areas’) in Queensland is restricted under the Commonwealth Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth).

What do the restrictions mean?

- Everyone must go into quarantine for 14 days before entering for an urgent purpose (no requirement for an approved biosecurity plan).
- Workers entering for an urgent purpose (no requirement for an approved biosecurity plan).
- Zones may apply to a single community, or an area. The Chief Health Officer may determine a community, based on health advice, can move to Stage 3 and be subject to Queensland’s Roadmap to Easing Restrictions.
- Restrictions on gatherings, permitted travel and business activity continue to apply under the state-wide Chief Health Officer Directions.

What are the restricted areas?

- Restricted areas include the Local Government Areas of: Aurukun; Cook; Hope Vale; Kowanyama; Lockhart River; Mapoon; Napranum; Northern Peninsula Area; Pompuraaw; Torres Strait Island; Torres; Wujal Wujal; Burke; Doomadgee; Cherbourg; Mornington: Palm Island; Wooralinda; Yarrabah and Weipa.
- Access remains restricted under the Biosecurity Act, however a person can now complete their 14 days of quarantine within community, as directed.

Who won't need to quarantine?

- Workers travelling through a community but not stopping.
- People travelling through a community but not stopping.
- Exemptions provided by Chair of LDMG.
- Workers entering for an urgent purpose (no requirement for an approved biosecurity plan).

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- Access to remote communities is now determined by Chief Health Officer Direction – Restricted Access to Remote Communities.

Will this be enforced?

- Police and ADF personnel will continue to vet those entering restricted areas, to ensure compliance.
- Communities may also transition back to Stage 2 from Stage 3 if an outbreak occurs and more restricted access arrangements are required.

Considerations for transitioning to Stage 2 or 3

Decisions about whether communities can move to Stages 2 and 3 will be made by the Chief Health Officer based on public health conditions for each community, including the reported number of cases, rapid response capability, community consultation and in line with the Commonwealth framework for easing remote area restrictions.

Access to remote communities is now determined by Chief Health Officer Direction – Restricted Access to Remote Communities.

Safe Travel Zones are now in place, allowing residents to travel without quarantining. Queensland’s Chief Health Officer is responsible for declaring Safe Travel Zones, according to public health advice and in consultation with LDMGs.

A list of Safe Travel Zones will be regularly reviewed and published on COVID19.qld.gov.au. Zones may apply to a single community, or an area. The Chief Health Officer may determine a community, based on health advice, can move to Stage 3 and be subject to Queensland’s Roadmap to Easing Restrictions.

Restricted access to areas previously designated under the Commonwealth Biosecurity Act no longer apply.

Entry and quarantine restrictions no longer apply for communities declared by the Chief Health Officer as being in Stage 3.

Communities declared to be in Stage 3 are subject to the same provisions as other Queenslanders under the Roadmap to Easing Restrictions (www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/roadmap-to-easing-queenslands-restrictions).

What does this mean for remote communities?

- Residents of remote communities and those visiting them must follow all existing Chief Health Officer Directions.

Other groups exempt from quarantine:

- Workers entering a remote community with an approved biosecurity plan.
- Workers entering a remote community for an urgent purpose (no requirement for an approved biosecurity plan).
- Visitors from anywhere within a Safe Travel Zone must stay within that Safe Travel Zone.
- As under Stage 1: quarantining inside community can occur and the same preconditions of entry apply, including no COVID-19 related symptoms in the last 14 days.

Taking the above into consideration, the Chief Health Officer has determined that Queensland’s Remote Communities would be progressed to Stage 3 on 1 June 2020.


Queensland Government

Restrictions on gatherings, permitted travel and business activity continue to apply under the state-wide Chief Health Officer Directions.

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