



MEDIA RELEASE

Pause in visitor arrivals to the island and testing requirements.

Visitor arrivals to the island will pause from tomorrow (6 January). This pause will remain in place until Wednesday 19 January. The pause is to allow NIHRACS to manage the current level of COVID cases in the community without additional cases from visitors arriving on the island. This decision will be reviewed on 12 January. Returning residents and essential workers will continue to be able to obtain Entry Permits.

Testing requirements for passengers to the island remain in place and are:

- A negative PCR test result in the 72 hours prior to arrival on island

or

- A negative Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) in the 48 hours prior to arrival and a negative RAT test undertaken within 24 hours of arrival on the island.

Due to the limited availability of RAT tests on the island passengers are required to bring a RAT test with them to comply with this requirement. There is no requirement to self-isolate before undertaking the second RAT test.

Anyone who has COVID symptoms or underlying health conditions should not travel to the island and anyone on the island who has the slightest symptoms should self-isolate and contact NIHRACS to have a RAT test undertaken.

Updated case numbers as of 5 January 2022

Rapid tests undertaken on island yesterday Tuesday 4 January identified an additional 11 (eleven) positive results. The total number of people on the island who have tested positive is now 31. Those who have tested positive are being closely monitored by NIHRACS with seven (7) cases being considered high risk.

There are approximately 180 close contacts in self-isolation on the island. Close contacts are being released when it is regarded safe to do so. More people will be placed into self-isolation as contact tracing of people who have tested positive occurs. Additional resources have been provided to assist NIHRACS with contract tracing.

If you are a close contact in isolation it is important that you do not have contact with the rest of the community. If you have any symptoms associated with COVID you must self-isolate and contact NIHRACS immediately and arrange for a test.

Restrictions

EMT is guided by the Response Escalation Matrix but, is flexible in its approach depending on community and environmental circumstances. As identified in yesterday's communication, the conditions for Level 4 of the matrix has been met, in consideration of NIHRAC's ability to monitor and manage.

Restrictions for the community remain at level 3, therefore apart from the pause on visitors arrivals the restrictions on business operations remain the same. At level 3 sport and recreation activities are suspended, however, social gatherings are permitted up to a maximum of 150 people. The number of people who can attend an event is determined by compliance with the 1 person per 4sqm rule.



Cafes and restaurants, personal services and non-essential businesses are permitted to operate with the following restrictions: enforced social distancing of 1person/4sqm and mandatory masks for all staff and customers when indoors.

It is highly recommended that for the next few weeks those who can work from home do so and people should try to minimise close interaction with each other -especially indoors.

EMT is very appreciative of the community support of the management measures that are currently in force and greatly regrets the disruption to the community and business associated with the visitor arrival pause. If we continue to abide with the measures that we currently have in place it is hoped that the virus moves through the community at a rate that can be managed by NIHRACS.

EMT will continue to review the situation daily.

COVID Support Team

NIRC has moved quickly to establish a COVID support team to help NIHRACS in the work associated with managing the pandemic. The team is comprised of NIRC management and staff along with others who have curtailed their holidays to help. EMNI thanks all those who are now working very hard to help ensure that COVID is managed to the extent possible on the island.

If you are in isolation and feeling unwell, please contact NIHRACS on 22091 and they will arrange to have a phone consultation with you. Do not go to the hospital. If you need anything such as food or supplies, please contact the Welfare Co-ordinator on 52777 so that this can be arranged.

For any questions about the COVID-19 response on Norfolk Island, please visit the Norfolk Island Regional Council website: <http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/covid-19-advice-norfolk-island> in the first instance or contact Sergeant Mark Watson, IMT Incident Controller at IO-Norfolk-Island@afp.gov.au or +6723 22222. Alternatively, could you contact the Welfare Co-ordinator on 52777.

16:00

5 January 2022

EMT