



EMNI - MEDIA RELEASE

17 May 2020

CHANGE IN RESTRICTIONS – ALERT LEVEL 1

With no suspected cases and no known active cases of COVID-19, the Emergency Management Team (EMT) have agreed to move the Norfolk Island community into Risk Matrix Level 1 restrictions, effective from 6am Monday 18 May, 2020. Level 1 restrictions allow all businesses to open as long as they follow the four square metre rule, social distancing and good hygiene practices are in place. Group sports will be able to return under the Level C guidelines of the Australian Institute of Sport Framework for rebooting sport in a COVID-19 environment.

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/05/australian-institute-of-sport-ais-framework-for-rebooting-sport-in-a-covid-19-environment.pdf>

WHY DOES NORFOLK ISLAND HAVE RESTRICTIONS IF THERE ARE NO ACTIVE COVID-19 CASES?

While the Norfolk Island borders have been closed, restrictions appear to have effectively controlled the spread of COVID-19. However, even with only a small number of people arriving on planes, there will always be a small risk of the virus arriving. At some point, the border will open and visitors will be permitted to travel here again. Opening the border will increase the possibility of COVID-19 spreading to the island.

- Are you prepared?
- Is your business prepared?
- Have you used the downtime to do everything you can to protect yourself, your family, your household, and your workplace from the increased risk?
- Are you practising these measures now, in preparation for the further lifting of restrictions in the future, including the resumption of visitors?

Maintaining a healthy island depends on the community understanding, accepting and following public health advice. It is imperative our community work together to practise all safe measures and adapt their lives to the 'new normal'. It is no longer acceptable to handshake, hug, or be in close proximity to others - otherwise you are potentially infecting yourself and those in your household, school or workplace.

EMT are in the process of developing a plan which includes monitoring how well the public is adhering to health guidance, including community attitudes, transport and traffic movements, and ways to capture movement data. While the current number of COVID-19 cases in Australia is low, it is likely there are people who are unknowingly infected and could spread the virus. We all need to be concerned how this would affect our community should any infected person travel to Norfolk Island. Everyone must individually take responsibility to adhere to social distancing and hygiene advice provided.

We want to avoid the uncertainty and disruption of restrictions being off and on again, including the further health, economic and social impacts which would result from this. Our continued success depends on all Norfolk Islanders staying COVID-safe. We all have an ongoing role to play in protecting our families, co-workers and the most vulnerable in the community.



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COVID-19 – WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

People who are, or are more likely to be, at higher risk of serious illness if they get the virus are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- people 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions
- people 70 years and older
- people with compromised immune systems

At this stage the risk to children and babies, and the role children play in the transmission of COVID-19, is not clear. However, there has so far been a low rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children, relative to the broader population.

There is limited evidence at this time regarding the risk in pregnant women.

CONDITIONS THAT INCREASE THE RISK OF SERIOUS ILLNESS FROM COVID-19

Anyone could develop serious or severe illness from COVID-19 but those with chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems are at greater risk. If you are working and you have a chronic condition or your immune system is compromised, talk to your employer or workplace about having a risk assessment.

See www.health.gov.au for further information on conditions and risk factors.

Detective Sergeant Glenn Elder
IMT Incident Controller