



20 April 2020

Hello,

We hope that you are staying safe and well during these uncertain times. This is our second COVID-19 Update. In addition to this update, YMAC's [website](#) contains regular blog posts, media statements and advocacy updates being undertaken, as well as links to key government information available online.

YMAC UPDATE

YMAC offices remain partially closed, with staff working remotely from home. We continue to provide native title and corporate services and staff can still be contacted via email, or the office reception phone numbers.

COMMUNITY ACTION

YMAC continues to work with Pilbara Aboriginal leaders to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute to the [REcov19ER website](#). This online resource was established for not only the Pilbara community, but others affected by the frequent changes impacting regional and remote WA

We are also working collaboratively with leaders in the Yamatji region towards a localised response to ensure better outcomes for Aboriginal people in the region. We will provide you with details of this work as it develops. If you want to find out more or become involved, please call Chris Dann through the Geraldton regional office phone number.

HEALTH INFORMATION LINKS

The COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, the following links are useful resources to provide you with the latest information and advice to keep yourself safe:

Australian Government: [Keep our Mob Safe, Stop The Spread](#) - Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on coronavirus (COVID-19) created by NIAA and Department of Health

West Australian Government [Coronavirus 2019 Health Alert](#) advice for public

World Health Organisation [Advice for Public](#) page

STATE GOVERNMENT

Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972

Over the past two years the State Government has conducted an extensive consultation process into a review of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation called for the final consultation on the draft *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2020* to be postponed while the Aboriginal community, key stakeholders and the State Government focus on the immediate response to COVID-19.

We are pleased that the Hon Ben Wyatt MLA, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has made the announcement that the State Government has rescheduled the final consultation until COVID-19 has subsided to ensure that the reform has the appropriate level of participation.

The fundamental components and direction of the proposed Bill will continue in the interim with key stakeholders, before the Bill is released for final public comment. Please click [here](#) for the Minister's media statement regarding the amended timeframe.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Rapid COVID-19 testing announced

The Hon Ken Wyatt has announced rapid COVID-19 testing for remote and rural communities. The rapid test results take about 45 minutes a huge reduction in wait time currently experienced by people in remote and rural communities. The list of communities to benefit from the program is yet to be decided. It is expected to be developed over the coming weeks, with the program expected to roll out mid-May. For the media statement click [here](#)

Boost to Indigenous businesses and communities

The Australian Government is making \$123 million available over two financial years to support Indigenous businesses and communities who are impacted by COVID-19.

Through Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) a new support package of up to \$50 million has been developed for Indigenous businesses affected by the crisis.

The new support package also includes:

- **Access to specialist advice** such as a rapid assessment of business positioning, cash-flow management and assistance to access available stimulus measures.
- Where an Indigenous business is not eligible for other government stimulus packages, it can apply for **working capital assistance** of up to \$100,000 via a loan/grant package (assessed on a needs basis), which will consist of:
 - A grant of up to 50% of the package amount;
 - For the loan component, up to 36 months loan term, zero repayments for the first 12 months, and preferential interest rates thereafter.

These measures follow earlier COVID-19 relief announced by IBA for both its customers and non-IBA customers. Those relief measures include a waiver of interest and deferral of loan repayments for business loan and equipment leasing customers for an initial 4-month period; a reduction in interest rates for all IBA home loan customers for an initial period of 6 months; as well as deferral of repayments for home loan customers in hardship.

Read the full IBA [media release here](#)

Federal employment and business inquiry on hold

The current inquiry into [Pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and business](#) has been temporarily suspended. Committee Chair Julian Leeser MP said that "in light of the continuing and evolving public health and economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee has decided to suspend its activities until further notice". The Committee greatly appreciates the contributions made to this inquiry so far.

Written evidence to the inquiry will continue to be accepted, and instructions on making a submission can be accessed by [visiting the committee's webpage](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and business owners can also interact with the inquiry without having to prepare a written submission by completing an online survey. This survey can be completed anonymously if desired and can be accessed [here](#).

KEY HEALTH MESSAGES TO REMEMBER AND SHARE

- Together we can keep our mob safe and stop the spread.
- Coronavirus is a sickness that can spread from person to person.
- Coronavirus can affect everyone in our communities. It can be dangerous, especially for our Elders or people who are already unwell.
- Stay at home as much as possible. It's important to remember to stay home, stay in community.
- Keep your distance, two big steps (at least 1.5m), from other people to protect our communities.
- Where possible, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds to keep your hands clean.
- Cough or sneeze into your arm or elbow, not your hands.
- Put your tissues in the bin after you use them and wash your hands after.
- Avoid touching your face with dirty hands – especially your eyes, nose and mouth. This is where the virus can enter your body.
- Clean surfaces regularly such as tables, kitchen benches, door handles, railings as well as commonly used items such as toys, phones, keys and wallets. Use antibacterial spray or disinfectant to remove the germs.
- Information is changing regularly. Stay up to date at Australia.gov.au or follow #keepourmobsafe on social media.

From everyone at YMAC, we hope you stay safe and well during this time.

CONTACT US:

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www.ymac.org.au www.recov19er.com.au