

Outback Councils Welcome New COVID-19 Protocols – 20/04/2020

All outback Queensland communities applaud the State Government for taking additional measures to help keep the region COVID-19 free.

The Western Queensland Alliance of Local Councils - a group representing 21 councils of outback Queensland - has moved to acknowledge the responsive leadership shown by the state government to address the Alliance's concerns over the potential of government employees to spread coronavirus as they return from Easter leave.

A new protocol has been approved by the Chief Health Officer which applies to the movement of Queensland Government employees and contractors with regards to travel to Western Queensland.

"This action provides assurances to Western Queensland councils and communities that all possible measures are being taken by the government to stop COVID-19 entering our region," said Jack Bawden Carpentaria Mayor and North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils.

Under the protocol any employee or contractor intending to travel to Western Queensland or returning to work in Western Queensland local government areas must confirm they:

- do not have COVID-19 related signs or symptoms immediately before entry; and,
- have had no close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case; and
- have not travelled interstate, overseas or to a COVID-19 hotspot in the last 14 days.

All employees will be screened by their employer before entry for the following symptoms and will not be allowed to enter region if they present with;

- a fever of 38 degrees or above; or
- a history of fever; or
- symptoms of acute respiratory infection.

"We raised our concerns that teachers returning from leave could unintendedly bring the virus into our communities, so to see this protocol applied to all government employees is more than we had asked for," said Andrew Martin Blackall-Tambo Mayor and Deputy Chair of Remote Area Planning and Development Board

The protocol will remain in place until the pandemic ends and applies to the following local government areas Balonne, Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall- Tambo, Boulia, Bulloo, Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Diamantina, Doomadgee, Flinders, Longreach, Maranoa, McKinlay, Mount Isa, Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Richmond and Winton.

"The councils of western Queensland have already asked their own staff to take measures if they have left the region to protect the community and the development of this protocol supports our approach," said Stuart McKenzie, Quilpie Shire Mayor and deputy chair of South West LGA

There are no cases of coronavirus in the north-west, central-west or south-west Queensland.

-ENDS-

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