

04 February 2022

### **What the Covid-19 Biosecurity Zones Mean for Council**

On Thursday 03 February 2022, the Australian Federal Minister for Health, Greg Hunt issued Section 477 of the Commonwealth Biosecurity Act 2015, which enforces the Covid-19 Biosecurity Zones on most of the Top End.

This comes after the number of positive Covid-19 cases continues to rise in the Northern Territory and in a number of the remote Aboriginal communities, including the Roper Gulf region.

The Roper Gulf Biosecurity Zones are divided by Wards of;

- Nyirrangulung Ward
- Never Never Ward
- Yugul Mangi Ward
- Numbulwar Numburindi Ward
- South West Gulf Ward

The Act restricts travel between Biosecurity Zones to essential reasons only and aims to help slow down the spread of Covid-19 in remote Aboriginal communities.

Biosecurity Zones will be in place until 17 February 2022, with potential for extension.

Roper Gulf Regional Council is committed to the health and safety of our people and Council wants to assure the public that all staff are taking all the appropriate precautions to ensure the safety of those who reside in the region.

Council has continued to restrict staff travel within the Roper Gulf region and from Katherine to essential reasons only so that essential Council services can still run in our communities and townships.

All staff must perform a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and receive a negative result on the day they plan to enter the Biosecurity Zone and this must be approved by Council's management and Covid-19 Safety team.

Acting Chief Executive Officer Marc Gardner said "Council's highest priority is the safety of our communities and importantly our staff.

"We are supportive of the measures that have been put in place and will go above and beyond the safety requirements to minimise any risk of Covid spreading to our communities."

Due to the rising number of positive cases in the region, Council is experiencing staff shortages in a number of our communities.

Due to this, Council services may need to be scaled back or temporarily closed down while staff isolate or recover from Covid-19.

“Our commitment is to ensure continuation of services, such as rubbish collection, still occurs in all our communities despite the current constraints.

“The current measures in place do not largely affect Council’s operations as the majority of our workforce are essential and meet the requirements of the current directives” Mr Gardner said.

Council apologises for this inconvenience, however the safety of our people is our number one priority.

The following Staff Memo was issued today by Council’s Acting Chief Executive Officer Marc Gardner:

<http://ropergulf.nt.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Staff-Memo-Biosecurity-Zones-04.02.2022.pdf>

For more information on the Biosecurity Zones, visit <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/remote-communities/biosecurity-zones>

ENDS

For all enquiries, please contact:

Bethany O’SULLIVAN  
Communications Coordinator  
(08) 8972 9024  
[bethany.osullivan@ropergulf.nt.gov.au](mailto:bethany.osullivan@ropergulf.nt.gov.au)