



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Stay put: stop putting us at risk by moving around

19 November 2021

With the COVID-19 outbreak in the Northern Territory still growing, the Northern Land Council is calling on all people in the Territory to not enter or leave Aboriginal communities unless it is absolutely necessary.

While Katherine and Robinson River are still in lockdown, the NLC is concerned about the spread of COVID-19 to other Aboriginal communities.

NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi said community members and workers need to stay put until the situation becomes clearer.

“Countrymen and whitefellas need to stop moving in and out of Aboriginal communities. Don’t put our mob further at risk,” he said.

“I’ve been talking to countrymen from plenty of different communities, and hearing worries, such as in Maningrida where local people are worried about too many people going in and out of their community.”

From today, the NT Government requires anyone who travels to a remote community that has a first-dose vaccination rate of less than 70% to get a negative Rapid Antigen Test before travelling.

The NLC calls on the NT Government to extend this to all people entering all Aboriginal communities.

Mr Bush-Blanasi said: “We want you to do a Rapid Antigen Test regardless of the vaccination rate because we want to do everything we can to protect our communities”.

“Wait until you get that negative result before you travel. I also encourage traditional owners and residents returning home to their community to do the same.”

Mr Bush-Blanasi congratulated people in Robinson River on their high vaccination rate.

“Hearing that the first-dose vaccination rate there is on the way to reaching 100 per cent is brilliant. Good on you mob. Our thoughts are with you and we hope those sick make a real quick recovery.”

The NLC CEO Joe Martin-Jard has called on the NT Government to put Borroloola into lockdown.

“We’re disappointed this outbreak has occurred. Territorians have been doing the right thing and getting vaccinated and then there’s people that come to the Territory and let us down,” he said.

“We call on the NT Government again, lock Borroloola down because a lot of families move back and forth between Robinson River and Borroloola.”

- Rapid Antigen Tests are available for free and can be picked up at the Royal Darwin Hospital Pandemic Clinic (open 8:30am to 4pm) and at the Alice Springs' Pandemic Coordination Centre (open 8am-4pm Monday to Friday).