



Director-General's COVID-19 UPDATE

Deidre Mulkerin | Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

Dear colleagues

I'm sure that we were all excited to hear the Premier announce earlier this week that some restrictions may possibly be eased if we continue to see very low levels of new daily cases of COVID-19 confirmed in Queensland.

Although it's way too early to celebrate yet, it certainly was great news. You've all put in a tremendous effort to continue to deliver essential services during this COVID-19 period, and while we're not out of it yet, the chance that some restrictions may ease soon gives us hope that one day our lives will return to a new normal.

The Minister and I continue to meet with the portfolio peak organisations and key stakeholders weekly. These meetings give us a chance to discuss the challenges you are facing, the questions you need answered, and how the department can best work with you to meet the needs of vulnerable Queenslanders.

Identification requirements for essential workers of NGOs

We've received further advice this week from the State Disaster Coordination Group Operations Commander that clarifies some guidelines around exempt workers, including volunteers and employees of NGOs.

This follows reports we've received about some NGO staff being approached by police when out in the community with clients.

As per the Chief Health Officer Directions, volunteers and employees of NGOs providing essential services and who cannot work from home, are permitted to leave their homes. This includes volunteers and NGO staff whose work relates to providing domestic violence services, child protection, health care, education, policing, emergency services, essential services provided by local government (such as rubbish collection), and Centrelink services.

These workers do not need to show ID or prove they work for a volunteer agency or NGO. This advice has been disseminated throughout the QPS. However, if you would like a letter from the department, please contact your contract manager.

With regard to remote communities, anyone conducting an essential activity is exempt from biosecurity guidelines and does not need to seek permission from the local decision maker (that is, the Mayor) to enter, but must comply with their relevant agency Risk Management Plan.

There is a standard form for workers entering remote communities available on the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships [website](#).

Update on essential workers and school arrangements

This week has thrown new challenges our way with the start of 'learning from home' for most children.

I know you are all taking a range of measures to support your staff. If staff members are struggling to work from home while also supervising children who are learning at home, I would

encourage them to talk to school principals directly.

We are working closely with the Department of Education to minimise the impact of learning at home on the sector and enable children of people who are doing essential work to go to school. If you are having any ongoing difficulty with children of your staff being able to attend school, please talk to school principals directly or contact your contract manager, who may be able to help.

Community Services Industry Alliance resources

Just a reminder that the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) has developed business continuity planning resources, and guidelines and fact sheets on infection control and PPE. They are all available on the [CSIA website](#). These resources have been reviewed by Queensland Health, so I encourage you take a look.

The CSIA has also launched an Industry Hotline as a single point of connection for issues relating to business continuity and workforce planning. I encourage any service providers looking for more information or support to make use of the hotline – and of course, keep your contract manager informed as well. The hotline number is **1800 027 420**.

Does your organisation need volunteers?

There are now more than 22,000 people from across the state who have registered to be part of Queensland's [Care Army](#). While the primary focus of the Care Army is social connection and essential services, such as delivering groceries and medicines for Queensland's seniors, Volunteering Queensland has also put out a call for any organisations and networks who may be in need of volunteers to get in touch.

If your organisation could do with extra volunteers during this time, please contact Volunteering Queensland's CEO, Mara Basanovic (3002 7602 or mara@volunteeringqld.org.au) or Amanda Nixon, Senior Manager Projects (3002 7632 or amanda.nixon@volunteeringqld.org.au) to discuss how the Care Army can help.

You'll find more information about how your organisation might be able to work with the Care Army on our [COVID-19 webpage](#).

COVID-19 Grant Fund

The Queensland Government has announced a \$27.75 million COVID-19 Grant Fund to assist the community health care sector where the need for additional services is emerging.

This funding will help ensure a range of critical public health services including culturally appropriate primary healthcare services, mental health and alcohol and other drugs services continue to be delivered.

More information about eligibility and how to apply is available on the [Queensland Mental Health Commission website](#).

Remember to check our [COVID-19 webpage](#), which is updated regularly, and keep in touch with your contract manager if you have any further questions.

And, as always, please take care of yourself, your family and friends, and stay safe.

Warm regards

Deidre Mulkerin

Director-General

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

