



30 July 2020

## **COVID-19 Update**

Despite efforts to curb the transmission of COVID-19 in Victoria the numbers of people contracting the virus continue to rise. Today over 700 new cases have been confirmed. Chains of community transmission are also emerging in several locations across New South Wales and over the past couple of days a low number of cases have also been identified in Queensland. This reinforces the highly infectious nature of COVID-19 and that we are entering a new and critical phase of the pandemic. The latest information in regards to the outbreaks in each of these areas can be found here: [Victoria](#); [NSW](#); [Queensland](#).

We cannot stress enough how damaging the consequences of COVID-19 spreading across our communities could be. While our elders and people with chronic conditions are most at risk, growing numbers of health experts across the world are reporting long term health impacts from contracting COVID-19. We all need to be vigilant to stop the virus from spreading into our communities. While we understand the frustration and fatigue people are feeling, unfortunately the risks are great and everyone single one of us has a role to play.

If you live in a hotspot area, regardless of whether restrictions have been imposed or not, please exercise caution. It is better to be safe than sorry. Limit your travel and participation in large gatherings if possible; practice physical distancing; wear a mask or face covering if this cannot be achieved; and, practice hand hygiene. If you are unwell or are displaying even the mildest of symptoms, arrange to get tested and self-isolate until you have been advised of your test results. In the circumstance you test positive please take heed of the health advice and remain in quarantine until you are advised otherwise. Contract tracers in Victoria have identified that some transmission is a consequence of people choosing to leave their homes and even attend work when unwell. If in Victoria please note that the Victorian Government is offering financial support to people who are required to stay home from work. Information about the support available can be found on the website included above.

In other more positive news the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap was launched today. The Agreement includes the first refresh of the Closing the Gap targets since their introduction in 2008. For the first time in history the Agreement has been negotiated in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through representation by the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations ([Coalition of Peaks](#)).

Importantly the Agreement prioritises Indigenous-led decision making, community-controlled services, improved accountability and access to reliable local level data to support decision making. You can find out more about the Agreement [here](#).

NATSIHWA is a member of the Coalition of the Peaks and has been privileged to have represented your voices in this process. Our Chair, David Follent and CEO Karl Briscoe have both reflected on how satisfying it has been seeing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming together with

shared understandings of the problems, shared understandings of the solutions and a shared determination to affect change.

The work of the Coalition of the Peaks provides a great example of the benefits of self-determination, community control and the importance of having a seat at the table and being actively engaged in the decisions affecting us.

Thanks again for the work that you do and please stay safe.

The NATSIHWA Team