



COMMUNITY COVID-19 UPDATE

31 March 2020



WHO YOU GOING
TO HAVE A CUPPA
WITH TODAY?



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Victorian Aboriginal
Community Controlled
Health Organisation is the
peak body for the health
and wellbeing of Aboriginal
peoples living in Victoria.

17-23 Sackville Street,
Collingwood, VIC, 3066

RTO No: 20739

www.vaccho.org.au

We acknowledge Country and the Traditional Owners of the lands, wherever you are reading this. We pay respects to Elders past and present, and we acknowledge the Ancestors and draw on their strength at this time.

VACCHO acknowledges that this is a challenging period for everyone. We are committed to doing all that we can to keep everyone informed and healthy during this time.

Thank you for your efforts in keeping each other safe and staying home.

VACCHO and our Member ACCOs are doing all we can to make sure that you have access to the appropriate support and healthcare you need. Every week all the VACCHO Member ACCOs from across Victoria meet online to discuss COVID-19 to make sure that our we are meeting our Community's needs during this difficult time.

We talk about health services, care packages, housing support, COVID-19 testing, business sustainability, supporting our workforces and anything else to support our Communities to get through COVID-19 and stay healthy and well.

We want to share some of the most important things from this discussion with you in this weekly Community notice:

1. **[Stage 3 restrictions](#) are now in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19.**

You would have seen all the videos on VACCHO's social media talking about the new COVID-19 Stage 3 restrictions. These restrictions are in place to help keep you and your mob safe during this difficult time. This is serious so please share with your family and friends.

Gatherings will be restricted to no more than 2 people except for members of your immediate household and for work or education.

There are on-the-spot fines of more than \$1,600 if these restrictions are breached. We don't want to see our mob getting these fines – so please stay at home.

2. **It is important that Community stay home and limit visitors entirely or to only one other person.**

There are only 4 reasons to be out of your home:

- shopping for food and essential supplies
- medical care or compassionate reasons
- exercise
- work and study (if you can't work or learn remotely)

We know that staying at home all the time can be hard for some of us, but it is the best way to keep Communities safe.

3. An Aboriginal person tested positive for COVID-19 in Melbourne's Northern suburbs recently.

Recently, one Aboriginal person from the Northern Suburbs tested positive for COVID-19. This person is stable and in self isolation after returning from overseas. The family asked us to tell you all. This is not to cause alarm or panic but remind us all about being careful. It's so important to stay at home unless you need to shop for food and essential supplies, get medical care or go out on compassionate reasons, exercise or work and study (if you can't work or learn remotely).

VACCHO would like to thank our Chairperson, Karen Heap, CEO of [Ballarat & District Aboriginal Co-Operative who spoke about this online.](#)

4. Emergency relief packages can be accessed by Victorians self-isolating due to coronavirus.

One of the most pressing concerns for Community members is getting food, soap, hand sanitisers, and other household supplies. We understand that this can be a real challenge.

Many VACCHO Members are working to get some supply centres set up soon. VACCHO has met with the Foodbank Victoria team who advised that they will be able to fast-track registrations for the majority of ACCOs.

Emergency relief packages including food staples, nappies and baby formula, soap, toothpaste and deodorant are available to anyone in need. You can call **1800 675 398** or go to this [link](#) to see if you qualify for support.

Alternatively, you can reach out to a local charity to see if they can help. Find your nearest local charity [here](#).

5. Keeping our Elders safe is so important.

We know that our Elders and vulnerable Community members are the most in need.

At this very anxious and isolating time, VACCHO Members are working hard to provide for their care. This includes access to clinical and outreach support to address the very real social and emotional impacts.

Recently VACCHO worked with one Aged Care ACCO to distribute iPads to Elders. This means that those Elders can stay connected to their families and support workers while in isolation through social media. We will continue to work hard and creatively to support Elders.

6. We hear that our Community needs support with housing, and we are working on this with government.

We know that there is a lot of stress with housing and homelessness at the moment. Especially for Community that need to isolate and don't have stable housing. We don't have all the answers yet, but this is a big priority. We will have more information for you shortly.

7. If you are currently receiving Centrelink payments, you can seek one off or fortnightly payments.

Please visit the VACCHO [website](#) for more information on how to access payments.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Our ACCOs will continue to work around the clock to support you.

If you don't feel well call your local ACCO to make an appointment or the coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

This is a dedicated hotline, open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

It's important we all continue to:

- **Practice routine hygiene** - please remember to wash your hands frequently with soap or use an alcohol-based hand gel, and do not touch your face.
- **Stay home if you're not well** - if you are showing any symptoms or have been exposed to any confirmed persons with COVID-19, please stay at home and call the coronavirus hotline for advice and to find out where you can be tested 1800 675 398.

Remember to keep checking the VACCHO [Facebook](#) page for new information and messages to keep health and safe during isolation.

If you have any questions, VACCHO has set up a special email address for you on COVID-19@vaccho.org.au. Feel free to get in contact with us.

We've set up an information section on our [website](#) where you can find more information about COVID-19 which we'll be adding to regularly. You can get further information on the DHHS [website](#). We also recommend you sign up to the daily Department of Health and Human Service updates through their [link](#).

Alternatively, you can call VACCHO on 03 9411 9411.