



24 March 2020

The Hon Keith Pitt MP
Minister Resources and Northern Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

RE: Resources sector national COVID-19 response principles and protocols

The Australian Petroleum Production Association (APPEA); the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) and its divisions in the Northern Territory and Victoria; the Queensland Resources Council; Chamber of Mines and Energy WA; South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy; Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing & Energy Council; and our respective members request that National Cabinet explicitly deem resources and its critical suppliers as essential services so that it can continue to provide its significant economic and social contribution to communities during this unprecedented COVID-19 national health crisis. We are united as a resource industry in our approach to you.

Attached are the resources industry principles (Attachment 1) and protocols (Attachments 2 and 3) in response to COVID-19 for both the oil and gas and mining sectors as a complete package. This is our national position for consideration by resource ministers and the National Cabinet today as a framework to be initiated nationally.

The resources sector is aligned and working hard to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The health, social and economic implications of the pandemic demand a united and determined industry commitment. APPEA, MCA, QRC and CMEWA in conjunction with the other state chambers and respective member companies have worked together on these principles and protocols.

The health and wellbeing of mining, oil and gas employees and the communities in which they operate is paramount. Protecting health and wellbeing is core to all processes across all operations. Companies seek to go beyond the minimum standards.

The resources sector is an essential service for the health and wellbeing of the communities in which we operate and the revenue supplied to government to deliver the health and economic response.

The starting point for industry is the official advice is the National Guidelines developed in consultation with the Communicable Diseases Network Australia and endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. This information is dynamic and must be consulted continuously to keep up with any changes.

The resources sector commits to continuously monitoring these guidelines and reviewing all company practices in line with any changes.

Importantly to enact these resources principles and protocols, states and territories will need to update their respective health regulations and guidelines to recognise these protocols during the COVID-19 health crisis.

The separate protocols for both the oil and gas and mining industries covers both general protection for fly-in/fly out (FIFO) and essential specialty contractor / vendor personnel interstate travel on an as needed basis (that don't follow regular FIFO patterns) and the specific and additional, critical actions to protect Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners. This will, of course, also include transport and logistics operators that are required to deliver to and from these operations, and that service the community as well.

There are specific concerns pertaining to workers in the resources sector in some states and the Northern Territory and their ability to continue to provide essential services to the communities they support. All operations will undertake to go beyond these protocols dependent of specific circumstances, but as an industry wide response, the attached is what is proposed.

There will still be the requirement for operations to tailor these protocols to individual needs, for example sites that have predominantly live-in workforces will be able to manage this in one manner through testing and quarantine measures on site, while those reliant on FIFO will have other protocols and sub-priorities such as declarations and temperature testing at port of origin, but, ultimately, the protection of workers, families and communities for health and wellbeing is paramount.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact directly. We look forward to hearing from you in this regard at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Tania Constable
Chief Executive Officer
Minerals Council of Australia

Andrew McConville
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Petroleum Production Association

ATTACHMENT 1



Resources sector – National COVID-19 response principles

The national task

The resources sector joins with the national governments and the community in working to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The health, social and economic implications of the pandemic demand a united and determined industry commitment.

Protecting health and wellbeing is core to all processes across all operations. The health and wellbeing of resources employees and the communities in which they operate is paramount. Companies seek to go beyond the minimum standards.

Resources represent an essential service for the health and wellbeing of the communities in which we operate and the revenue supplied to governments to deliver the health and economic response. Mining and oil and gas are integral to sustaining and servicing the nation, regions and communities. For example, the minerals industry and its supply chain together contribute about 15 per cent of Australia's economy and support a total of 1.1 million jobs.

In calendar 2019, the resources sector generated \$290 billion of export revenue (59 per cent of total export revenue) and invested \$34 billion in new capital expenditure. For example, the minerals industry also paid \$31 billion in company taxes and royalties in 2017-18.

Resources directly employs 240,000 people in highly-paid, highly skilled jobs, mostly in rural and regional Australia. Industry recognises its responsibility to support the socioeconomic development of the communities and regions in which it operates, including a commitment to environmental stewardship and building strong relationships with landholders and communities.

A national framework, endorsed by National Cabinet, is essential to ensure seamless and effective operation of essential services functions.

The commitments in this document cover both general arrangements, those for fly-in/fly out (FIFO) workers and the specific and additional, critical actions to protect Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners. FIFO workers should be recognised as essential under state and territory laws.

Health and safety

The primary reference for the industry is the official advice is the National Guidelines developed in consultation with the Communicable Diseases Network Australia and endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. This information is dynamic and will be consulted continuously to keep up with any changes.

Industry commits to continuously monitoring these guidelines and reviewing all company practices in line with any changes: <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm>

Companies also follow the direction of state and territory medical authorities as they occur.

Health and safety of workers

While committed to the national health guidelines, the resources sector commits to standards and practices that go beyond these recommendations. This includes:

- Extensive and continuous education bulletins on health and hygiene among workforces
 - Working with state and territory governments and representative bodies on localised public education campaigns
- Mandatory online education (singular message: act on risk, seek medical advice early)
 - Supporting employees, families and communities on mental health needs
- Complete compliance with national guidelines on self-isolation (symptomatic, recent contact with infected persons, or recently returned from overseas)
 - No staff member leaves their home under these conditions
 - No staff travels to work with any signs of illness (cold or flu)
- Active screening questionnaire prior to travel
- Temperature checks at point of origin, transit and at work sites
 - Where charter flights are used, testing of employees before flights
 - For commercial flights, working with governments and airports for temperature checks at commercial airports
- Isolation and case tracking in the event of anomaly
 - Individual states will have particular regional areas where industry will work with governments for individuals who are infected
- Continuous workforce health monitoring and strengthened existing stringent hygiene protocols at site

- Support for on-site health workers
- Extensive workplace hygiene practices – hand washing, social distancing, ban on non-essential travel and meetings, physical separation of teams and shift change over
 - Extensive distribution of hand sanitizers backed with workplace education campaign
 - High risk employees working from home
 - Physical separation of teams at worksites (workplaces, meals etc.), while travelling, and between shift (at change over)
 - Create special quarantine/isolation zones and special evacuation arrangements
 - Workers with specific or legislative safety roles are kept separated
 - Distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - Investigate, where feasible, testing facilities for virus in major resources regions
- Increased cleaning and sanitising of sites.

Indigenous communities

Across Australia, the resources sector is privileged to partner and engagement with Aboriginal communities. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic MCA members have been working closely with host Traditional Owners, local disaster management committees, health services providers and others to support community awareness.

The resources sector recognises that while anyone is susceptible to COVID-19, people with chronic illnesses and compromised immune systems are more vulnerable. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience disease burden 2.3 times higher than other Australians.

Resources companies have introduced stringent measures to protect Aboriginal people from communities from COVID-19. This is essential to reduce transmission.

At the same time, resources companies provide the essential services that communities need including health services, electricity and emergency response capability. This mean additional care is required. The initiatives already introduced which will continue include:

- Ceasing face-to-face activities until further notice while maintaining strong engagement, including support for community-led health planning and local economic activity
- Taking special care in areas where workforce are resident near indigenous communities
- Continued essential services provision including health services, electricity and emergency response capability. Strict hygiene protocols are in place for employees undertaking essential services in communities
- Training of gate and security personal on interactions with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders at sites

- Supporting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services providers to undertake awareness activities and implement **hygiene** protocols
 - Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (including Traditional Owner and representative groups) who are moving around the Territory between communities
 - Progressing arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees returning from sites to remote communities.

Operational contributions

Workplace organisation and reporting

Non-essential work is being scaled back and working from home arrangements and split teams are being implemented across the sector. Companies are examining arrangements to have FIFO workers housed at operations. The following protocols apply for critical staff to maintain the resource sectors' essential contribution.

- Reporting to government of what workers are coming and what tasks they are performing
 - Establishing dedicated contact points within companies for government
- Investigate establishment of resources employee only commercial and charter flights in the medium term.

Critical suppliers and contractors:

- Similar treatment of employees as an essential services providing for ongoing maintenance of operations and allied services (health, electricity, water, and emergency response capability)
- Companies to insist on questionnaire, temperature checks, illness prohibitions and hygiene practices required of direct employees
 - All employees will be required to be isolated while awaiting transport in a vehicle to site
 - Vehicles will be cleaned before and after transit.

Implementing a national framework

A national framework is critical for effective maintenance of essential industries.

Protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a priority for the industry. The resources industry undertakes to continue ongoing discussions with the representative groups on these protocols and practices as part of our strong partnership.

On behalf of members and state and territory organisations MCA and APPEA are committed to these practices and will work with federal Government on behalf of the national Cabinet to develop a framework of implementation. Individual companies may have further initiatives that they will provide for the national governments.

22 March 2020