



MEDIA RELEASE

Kimberley Regional Group

25 May 2020

KIMBERLEY LEADERS WELCOME MOVES TO REOPEN THE KIMBERLEY

The Kimberley Regional Group (KRG) warmly welcomed the announcement by the Premier that the State is making an application to the Commonwealth to lift the Biosecurity Zone in Western Australia, with the expectation that will come into effect on the 5th June 2020.

This means that parts of the Kimberley will be opened only a week after the relaxation of other regional borders in Western Australia.

The KRG acknowledged the likely exception of remote Aboriginal communities and supported direct consultation with those communities about their expectations in relation to access.

'The relief of businesses in the Kimberley is obvious,' said Chris Mitchell, Chair of the Kimberley Regional Group.

'We acknowledge the Premier and the WA Government's work, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government, during the COVID-19 crisis and the timely lifting of the Biosecurity determination for the region,' said Mr Mitchell.

The Kimberley is highly reliant on a relatively short dry season tourism industry and it is hoped that Western Australians will chose to come north to the Kimberley this southern winter.

'Many of our regional businesses can now come out of hibernation and get ready to greet visitors,' said Geoff Haerewa, President, Shire of Derby West Kimberley.

'It is not just accommodation and restaurants that will benefit, petrol stations along the Gibb River Road can now look forward to the resumption of trade.'

Locals will also benefit from the relaxation of the mandatory 14 day quarantine period.

'This is going to be very beneficial for our people who travel to Perth for medical treatment as it will significantly reduce timeframes,' said Malcolm Edwards President Shire of Halls Creek.

'Remote communities will continue to be protected and they will be able to work with the State Government about when and how restrictions will be lifted for their communities.'

It is likely that the entire Kimberley economy will benefit from the reopening of the region.

'This is not just about tourism, a whole range of businesses will benefit including the agricultural and pastoral sectors,' said David Menzel, President Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley.

‘Whilst vigilance will continue to be necessary, this is a major step forward in the recovery process.’

The KRG has worked tirelessly to represent the best interests for the region, initially calling for strong isolation measures then working with other key stakeholders to develop a COVIDSafe strategy for reopening.

‘We have worked together to develop a plan and will direct our energy into ensuring that there is a COVIDSafe reopening of the Kimberley,’ said Harold Tracey, President Shire of Broome.

‘It will be fantastic to share our wonderful region with visitors, but equally to see families united again across the State.’

END

About the Kimberley Regional Group

The Kimberley Regional Group (KRG) represents the four Shires in the region being:

- Shire of Broome
- Shire of Derby West Kimberley
- Shire of Halls Creek
- Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley

Administrative Contact	Contacts
Debra Goostrey 0439 380266 Kimberley Regional Group	Chris Mitchell Chair Kimberley Regional Group and Councillor of the Shire of Broome 0407 773 258
Gareth McKnight +61 8 9191 3483 Gareth.McKnight@broome.wa.gov.au	Cr Harold Tracey President Shire of Broome 0409 900 668
	Geoff Haerewa President Shire of Derby West Kimberley 0419 950 903
	Cr Malcolm Edwards President Shire of Halls Creek 0488 306 911
	Cr David Menzel President Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley 0409 691 386