



QSNTS

## COVID-19 Response

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has created an uncertain and rapidly changing environment from a public health perspective and which has a significant impact on QSNTS business operations.

That rapidly changing environment has obvious impacts on the way QSNTS undertakes its functions and responsibilities.

QSNTS is committed to, and has prioritised, the health and wellbeing of its constituents, staff and stakeholders.

Within the constraints of complying with Government directives and the advice of the World Health Organisation<sup>1</sup> and Commonwealth<sup>2</sup> and Queensland health bodies<sup>3</sup>, QSNTS will operate to ensure that it continues to properly service its constituents and fulfils its statutory functions. That will be done subject to some adaptations to usual work practices to meet the extraordinary circumstances.

Decisions have been taken to implement procedures to minimise the risk of infection to staff and constituents.

Many QSNTS staff members will be working from home – they will still be available to make and take calls and to respond to emails. The Brisbane office will be staffed but there will be fewer people in the office at any one time. For the time being, the Mt Isa office is not affected.

While the current health crisis persists, please only come into one of our offices (Brisbane and Mt Isa) by appointment and then only if you are completely free of cold or flu-like symptoms. You should try to resolve any queries by email or telephone before making an appointment for a face-to-face consultation.

QSNTS staff will be working diligently to ensure that everything is in readiness for the inevitable increase in work when the COVID-19 emergency eases.

It is prudent that large meetings are not held until expert advice tells us that it is safe to hold large meetings.

Meetings that have been notified will be postponed – more information will be given to claimants and native titles holders effected by this decision.

The resumption of large meetings will be subject to review as the advice of the Commonwealth or State develops in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Court orders may also impact this.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government Department of Health - <https://www.health.gov.au/>

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Health - <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/>



Having regard to the health and best interests of claimants and native title holders, QSNTS will work closely with the Applicant for claim groups and PBC Boards to gauge their views around holding meetings.

We anticipate that small meetings that are likely to be relatively short in time will proceed subject to appropriate social distancing arrangements being adopted. Where possible and appropriate, technology will be used to host meetings.

Increased demand on Internet Service Providers brought about by a huge increase in telecommuting may cause some technical issues in holding meetings and delivery of documents – please be patient if that occurs.

Some meetings may be affected by decisions made by venue providers or third parties. QSNTS is bound to accept decisions of venue providers and communities in deciding whether planned meetings or evidence gathering can proceed in a particular place.

In all instances QSNTS will be guided by Government directives, expert advice and Applicant and PBC Board views as to the best interests of their People.

QSNTS will continue to monitor Governments’ announcements and advice concerning COVID-19 and its management, to ensure that arrangements are in place to minimise any adverse impacts on its people, constituents, stakeholders and its operations.

QSNTS will continue to follow the advice of the Governments and their experts to focus on the minimisation of the spread of the virus in the community.

This advice will be updated as the situation changes.

