



17 June 2020

Aboriginal Health Research Ethics Committee (AHREC) Pandemic Follow Up Communique

Dear Research Community,

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, on 6/4/2020, AHREC released its formal decision advising that all active studies involving face-to-face in-person fieldwork must suspend such activities. AHREC underlined the importance of pandemic planning activities for Aboriginal stakeholders and communities, and recommended researchers to also assess the importance of all non-essential research related contact and consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders. Thank you for your understanding and collaboration during this time.

As a follow-up to our communique and effective immediately until further notice, please be advised of AHREC's subsequent decisions made at its meeting on 11/6/2020 as follows:

1. Whilst there have not been any identified cases of COVID-19 in SA recently, this situation may change, and Aboriginal communities or individuals may be placed under lockdown or isolation at any moment. All researchers are recommended to continue to plan and conduct their studies bearing this risk in mind. The researchers must continue to monitor and obey the public health advice provided nationally and by SA Health, and all Federal and jurisdictional laws, regulations and directives, particularly that of concerning Aboriginal communities.
2. Granted that access to a location or Aboriginal community is legally permitted, and Aboriginal communities also approve of research activities to continue, all studies with existing approvals in place from AHREC involving face-to-face in-person fieldwork such as information sessions, recruitment, interviews, focus groups or yarning circles can now re-commence such activities. All fieldwork must be implemented in accordance with public health advice in terms of isolation and physical distancing.

Please note that all further updates by AHREC regarding the COVID-19 pandemic will be provided at AHREC's website at:

<https://ahcsa.org.au/research-overview/ethical-review-ahrec/>

If you need to discuss your particular study, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us by contacting the Executive Officer, Dr Gokhan Ayturk

Gokhan.Ayturk@ahcsa.org.au.

Kind regards,

Aboriginal Health Research Ethics Committee