

Outback Store's response to coronavirus (COVID-19)

16/3/2020

As the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) escalates around the globe and Australia, Outback Stores is working around the clock with store managers, staff and communities to reduce risks to those living in remote Australia.

While the situation is constantly unfolding, the latest information is that there is no community spread of the virus in the Northern Territory or any communities we operate in Western Australia or South Australia - and we would like to keep it that way.

Outback Stores has established a working group to coordinate our response to the virus. The group is focused on three key areas:

- Our customers - Keeping community stores open and ensuring access to essential items
- Our team - Keeping our team and communities safe, healthy and well informed
- Our suppliers - Working with suppliers to ensure uninterrupted trade and ensure food security for remote communities

Last week, we suspended all travel for non-essential services into remote communities until further notice. We continue to monitor travel closely for essential services (store managers) for remote communities. All non-essential interstate travel for our support team has also been suspended. We also encourage staff to limit their travel to other areas on weekends.

All employees returning to Australia from all overseas countries must take two weeks of self-isolation. During this time Outback Stores will support staff with the option to work from home or take paid leave.

Face to face meetings, particularly community boards of directors and store manager meetings, have been cancelled and other means of communication such as teleconferencing are being used.

The other focus is on ensuring vigilant hygiene of the staff and store - to protect them and our customers.

This includes communicating public health hygiene messaging such as hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and social distancing. We have also organised for hand sanitiser to be placed on front counters in all stores.

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Importantly, we ensure any staff impacted by the pandemic – full-time, part-time or casual - will be supported by the business.

So far there has been no impact to supply. We have increased assessment procedures and communication with our key suppliers to ensure we are ahead of any potential issues.

We continue to monitor the situation closely and are prepared to mobilise our Darwin and Alice Springs support offices if required to a work from home environment, whilst assessing what trading could look like in a community if a virus becomes established in a community.

We thank you for your patience and for working with us.

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