

Pie in the sky: Aussie plane delivers pizza to locked-down outback

April 3 2020

Pizza and beer are being delivered by plane to remote ranches in the Australian outback in an attempt to bring a slice of cheer to those in extreme isolation under the virus lockdown.

The Dunmarra Wayside Inn, a usually bustling roadside diner in Australia's Northern Territory, used a small fixed-wing aircraft for a trial run of what it hopes will become a weekly flying takeaway service to far-flung cattle stations.

"The station that we did send them to absolutely loved them, so much that they ate them for breakfast the next morning," Ben Anderson, the inn's manager and pizza cook, told AFP on Friday.

The business had tried to keep the service under wraps until it was certain the plane deliveries would work. "We've put in a massive [pizza oven](#), which we kept extremely secret," Anderson said.

But news of the tasty drop-off proved too hot to handle, and on Friday he was fielding calls from eager reporters—with one [radio station](#) asking if he could deliver to their studio in Perth, over 3,000 kilometres (1,800 miles) away.

"That's probably a bit out of our range," he said. At the moment, Anderson and his team are only planning to fly to properties within 100 kilometres.

'Friendly gesture'

The idea was cooked up as [coronavirus](#) travel restrictions bit into the outback's peak tourist season, stopping the usual stream of caravans and months of booked-out rooms.

Regional travel in the Northern Territory remains strictly controlled, with large swathes in lockdown over fears for remote indigenous communities who experts warn could be particularly susceptible to an outbreak, due to higher rates of chronic illness.

The idea to fly pizzas and other supplies to remote properties was more about supporting those in the area than simply a [business venture](#), the inn's owner Gary Frost told national broadcaster ABC.

"We're just doing it as a friendly gesture to try and help people out," he said.

Under the restrictions, even fly-in, fly-out deliveries have to be left at the door for residents to pick up.

"I said to the boss, maybe we should just get parachutes and drop them out the sky but you never know where they're gonna end up," Anderson said.

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