

# COVID-19

# RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

## Media release

22 June 2020

### Ah-ah-ah-CHOO – common cold dobbing Aussies in for not social distancing

With COVID-19 rapidly fading from memories with the relaxing of restrictions, rural doctors are sending a reminder that social distancing needs to be the 'new normal'.

Dr Adam Coltzau, Clinical lead of the COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response said that an increase in presentations of the common cold to doctors' surgeries is a telling sign.

"Colds are just another virus and effective social distancing will also stop it's spread," Dr Coltzau said.

"The fact that we are now seeing patients coming in with cold-like symptoms tells us exactly what they've been doing... and that is NOT keeping their distance.

"With community transmission of COVID-19 under control in most of Australia, the new Victorian hotspot shows us what can happen when people relax the personal habits that were keeping them safe.

"Now is definitely not the time to let this slip. Our new normal needs to involve keeping the 1.5m rule, regular hand washing and coughing or sneezing into your elbow, in order to keep everyone safe and healthy."

Rural peak bodies, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) meet regularly to discuss the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on rural Australia.

"The reopening of many businesses, industries and social opportunities is making a real difference to the economies of rural towns, and the lives of the people in them," Dr Coltzau said.

"But with travel restrictions easing and people starting to move from community to community, whether it be for work or recreation, we still need to be careful about the risks, particularly to our vulnerable populations of the elderly and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



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“We encourage everyone to keep their travel to a minimum, reducing the potential exposure of rural areas that are currently COVID-free.

“Pack the hand sanitiser, minimise your contact, keep your 1.5m distance, and for goodness sake, if you have a sniffle, get tested!

“Even if you think it’s a cold... get tested! This will protect both yourself, and others from the risk of a second wave of COVID-19.”

Find more information on how to protect yourself, your family and community from COVID-19 at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

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A high resolution photo of Dr Adam Coltzau is available here:

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/712>

A high resolution photo of ACRRM President, Dr Ewen McPhee, is available here:

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/968>

A high resolution photo of RDAA President, Dr John Hall, is available here:

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/687>

**Available for interview:**

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