

# COVID-19

# RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

## Media release

Wednesday 6 May 2020

### Don't let your guard down on COVID-19, rural doctors warn

With social distancing restrictions being wound back in some states, rural Australians could be forgiven for thinking that the COVID-19 crisis is over – but don't let your guard down yet, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) warned today.

The peak rural doctors' bodies said while the curve has flattened, the return of the pandemic in countries like Singapore - and ongoing cases in Australia - show everyone must stay vigilant in minimising the spread of coronavirus.

"The recent COVID-19 cluster at the meatworks in Victoria, the ongoing crisis at the Sydney nursing home, and numerous other cases show this emergency is far from over" **Dr Adam Coltzau, Clinical Lead for ACRRM and RDAA's COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response, said.**

"And with some restrictions starting to be wound back, and Australians moving around more widely, there is significant potential for coronavirus to spread further into rural communities in the coming months.

"If we let down our collective guard, there's a very strong likelihood that COVID-19 will bounce back hard a second time.

"Our key message to all Australians is this - if you have any flu-like symptoms or a fever, do not go to work or mix freely in the community. Instead, self-isolate and seek testing for COVID-19. This is a serious illness and you need to take it seriously.

"We strongly encourage all rural Australians to download the COVIDSafe App – you may not have confirmed COVID cases in your community right now, but this could change quickly.

"By downloading the app, you are helping our public health officials to increase the timeliness of contact tracing and helping to prevent a second wave."

Dr Coltzau also urged rural patients to continue to see their doctor if they have other health concerns, or need to have other health conditions checked.

"Other illnesses don't stop just because of COVID-19" he said.

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“Make sure you are talking with your doctor and practice – by phone in the first instance – if you are feeling unwell for any reason, or if you have longer-term conditions that you are managing.

“Your local general practice is open for business, and ready to help you, including via telehealth. The healthier we can keep you during the COVID-19 emergency, the better.”

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:**

Dr Adam Coltzau - Clinical Lead, RDAA and ACRRM COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response

Dr John Hall - RDAA President

Dr Ewen McPhee - ACRRM President

**Media contacts (RDAA)**

Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890

Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638

**Media contacts (ACRRM)**

Petrina Smith on 0414 820 847

ACRRM National Office on 1800 223 226