

# COVID-19

# RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

## Media release

Thursday 2 April 2020

### Complacency will cost lives: Rural doctors issue stark warning on COVID-19

While there are very early signs that the curve is beginning to flatten on COVID-19, there is an extraordinarily long way to go - and rural and remote Australians must not become complacent in slowing its spread, or more people will die.

That's the stark warning issued today by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), as they urge rural Australians to implement something the bush is famous for – community spirit – in fighting the spread of the virus.

The organisations are calling on rural Australians to stick to social distancing measures, good hygiene, and restricting unnecessary travel to help keep the virus at bay.

“If coronavirus gets a chance to spread widely throughout rural and remote Australia, the pressure on our already stretched rural healthcare system will be enormous – and it will cost lives” **Dr Adam Coltzau, Clinical Lead for RDAA and ACRRM’s COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response, said.**

“We are pleading with rural and remote Australians – show the community spirit that the Australian bush is famous for, and keep doing your bit to prevent the spread of this virus.

“Keep ensuring that you and your family are self-isolating, practising good hand hygiene, and avoiding unnecessary travel.

“Coronavirus is not just impacting our major cities - it is already spreading in rural communities.

“All rural and remote Australians need to remain vigilant in keeping this virus at bay.

“We saw the community spirit of the Australian bush thrive during the recent bushfires.

“We need that same community spirit now.

“You need to look out for your neighbour right now, as you did during the bushfire season. But this time, it means keeping your distance from others, practising good hygiene, only travelling when you absolutely need to, and working from home where you can.

“If you don't do your bit in slowing the spread of coronavirus, more rural and remote Australians will die – it's as simple as that.

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“Keeping the community spirit alive, and ensuring your actions benefit the whole community, will help save the lives of more rural Australians during the COVID-19 emergency.”

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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