

COVID-19

RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

Media release

Wednesday 25 November 2020

Surprise outbreak + open borders: don't drop your guard on COVID just yet

Last week's surprise outbreak of a COVID cluster in Adelaide – combined with the re-opening of more state borders – makes it critical that Australians do not let their guard down on coronavirus.

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) warned today that, as restrictions are eased, there is potential for coronavirus to spread quickly again if Australians simply think the crisis is over and don't take the necessary precautions.

“While things are looking promising for the rollout of an effective vaccine, we are not out of the woods yet”
RDAA President, Dr John Hall, said.

“As we saw last week, COVID is still with us – and it can spread virtually unnoticed.

“In the case of the Adelaide cluster, it was only due to the good sense of a junior doctor that the cluster was uncovered...and as a result, South Australia seems to have dodged a bullet.

“While life seems like it is finally getting back to normal, getting to this point has been hard-earned and it would be terrible to find ourselves back in lockdown.

“The key to avoiding this is to ensure we all keep up the things that have been keeping us COVID safe.”

ACRRM President, Dr Sarah Chalmers, said self-isolating and getting tested if unwell remain crucial ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the community.

“We can't emphasise it enough – if you are feeling unwell with flu-like symptoms (even if only minor) please stay away from work (or school) and don't go out and about in the community” she said.

“Instead, get tested immediately and self-isolate until you get the results.

“And please, if you have even mild symptoms, make sure you phone your local general practice or hospital before attending, as it is critical that we minimise the risk of COVID infection in these settings.

“Ringling ahead ensures general practices or hospitals can be prepared for your arrival, or they can advise you of the best option for seeing you for a test or further treatment.”

It is also critical that all Australians:

- consider wearing a mask when outside your household
- continue to maintain at least 1.5 metres social distancing when outside your household

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- continue through hand-washing with soap and/or hand sanitiser
- sneeze and cough into a tissue or your elbow
- download the COVIDsafe app and state government 'check in' apps
- follow the latest COVID health directives issued by state or federal health authorities

Find more information on how to protect yourself, your family and community from COVID-19 at www.health.gov.au. Find a video from the Federal Department of Health on how to properly wear a mask [here](#).

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

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

A high resolution photo of ACRRM President, Dr Sarah Chalmers, is available here:

<https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/1291>

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

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

Available for interview:

Dr John Hall - RDAA President

Dr Sarah Chalmers - ACRRM President

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