

COVID-19

RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

Media release

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Watch out, COVID about! Rural Australians urged to be vigilant as cases grow

With more cases of COVID-19 being confirmed in regional locations, rural Australians must remain vigilant in protecting themselves, their families and communities, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) warned today.

“A significant increase in COVID-19 in our communities is something rural doctors have been very worried about since the pandemic first made headlines in Australia” **Clinical Lead for RDAA and ACRRM’s COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response, Dr Adam Coltzau, said.**

“While the cases in rural Australia are still relatively small in number, they have real potential to become significant if their spread is not checked over the coming days.

“Regional and rural Australians must do everything they can to avoid contracting the virus, and to ensure they don’t spread it – even if unknowingly.

“While all of us had hoped we wouldn’t see a resurgence of coronavirus, this is now happening – accordingly, all Australians need to take personal action and responsibility to stop it spreading further.

“We strongly support the Victorian Government’s recommendation that regional and rural Victorians wear a mask if they cannot ensure at least 1.5 metres in physical distancing.

“We recommend that rural Australians in other states do the same, particularly in those towns where community transmission of the virus has been confirmed.

“The gold standard in reducing the risk of getting or spreading coronavirus is to minimise your physical interaction with the wider community wherever possible – that is, by physically isolating and staying at home.

“But if you do need to go out for essential activities, make sure you keep at least 1.5 metres distance (or more) between you and others, regularly wash your hands or use hand sanitiser while out and about, and consider wearing a mask.

“And crucially, if you feel even slightly unwell with cold or flu symptoms, please don’t go out into the community except to get tested for COVID-19. Then head back home and isolate while awaiting your result.

“Please also ensure that you and your family members have downloaded the COVIDSafe app, as this can greatly assist with contact tracing.

“The coming days and weeks will be critical in fighting the spread of COVID-19 in rural Australia. We urge all rural Australians to please do your bit...and help fight the spread of coronavirus in the bush.”

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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: <https://publish.viostream.com/play/bfxgwognhhfmnn>.

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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