

COVID-19

RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

Media release

15 July 2020

Don't drop the ball: Rural communities urged to stay COVID safe

Australia's peak rural medical bodies have warned rural Australians that, while most of the recent COVID-19 cases have been in metropolitan areas, there is significant potential for new cases to present in rural communities in the coming weeks.

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) have urged those living in, and travelling through, rural communities to ensure they don't drop the ball on COVID-19 and are being COVID safe at all times.

"With the recent re-opening of some state borders, increased school holiday travel – particularly to holiday towns – and ongoing freight operations between states and into regional areas, it is reasonable to assume coronavirus could spread into more rural communities in the weeks ahead" **Clinical Lead for RDAA and ACRRM's COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response, Dr Adam Coltzau, said.**

"Indeed, some new COVID-19 cases have already been confirmed in a number of rural communities in Victoria and NSW.

"We have also seen this week that some people who visited the Crossroads Hotel at Casula, in outer Sydney, have now presented for testing in Queensland – so clearly there is potential for the virus to quickly move long distances as people do.

"A key message from governments is that anyone showing any symptoms, however mild, should get tested for COVID-19, as this can greatly assist in tracing transmission of the virus.

"We urge rural Australians to ensure they are doing this.

"And please, if you haven't already done so, download the COVIDSafe app to make contact tracing easier."

Dr Coltzau said it is critical that rural Australians continue to maintain social distancing of at least 1.5 metres, regularly wash their hands, cover their mouth and nose if they cough or sneeze, and self-isolate and get tested if they are showing any cold or flu symptoms.

"It is incredibly important that we don't drop the ball on COVID-19, and lose all of the progress we have made over the past six months" he said.

"We must continue to act as though there is coronavirus circulating in our rural communities – because, in all reality, it very well may be."

Find more information on how to protect yourself, your family and community from COVID-19 at 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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