

COVID-19

RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

Media release

31 July 2020

Young people KO'd by COVID

With 10 Victorians in their 20s in intensive care with COVID-19, it's clear that it's a killer for young and old alike, Australia's peak rural medical bodies warned today.

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) are urging young rural Australians to take social distancing, mask wearing and hand hygiene messages very seriously.

"We cannot overstate this," **RDAA President Dr John Hall** said. "Young people have been dying from COVID-19 overseas, and young people are in intensive care in Australia because of this very serious virus.

"The Victorian Premier told us earlier in the week that 26 Victorians under 40 — including 10 people in their 20s — are battling coronavirus in hospital.

"If you think because you are young and in good health you are immune from getting gravely ill, think again.

"For many COVID-19 may not have much of a punch, but it's a heavyweight of a disease and for some younger Australians it could be a serious knockout."

ACRRM President, Dr Ewen McPhee, said there was no room for complacency in rural Australia – COVID-19 is not just a disease impacting on metropolitan Melbourne and Sydney.

"Many Australians from a wide variety of rural areas have contracted COVID-19" Dr McPhee said.

"No-one is immune. Everyone – urban and rural, young and old – needs to take personal responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. That includes ensuring you are:

- maintaining social distancing of at least 1.5 metres
- frequenting washing or sanitising your hands
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow
- wearing a mask – not only where the law requires it, but also where you can't guarantee social distancing (like at busy shopping centres)
- if you have even the mildest of symptoms, not going to work or into the community – but getting tested and then self isolating until you get your result

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“Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19 and infecting others too – this is not just an older person’s disease, it can impact anyone...and it impact severely.”

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 RDAA President, Dr John Hall, is available here: <https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/687>

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 Dr Adam Coltzau is available here: <https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/712>

Available for interview:

Dr John Hall - RDAA President

Dr Ewen McPhee - ACRRM President

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

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