

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Minister Steven Miles, Chief Health Officer Jeanette Young

Date: 1 May 2020

Duration: 11 minutes 20 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

Okay so in further good news for Queensland overnight, zero new cases. Let me repeat that again – zero new cases. And Queensland, you are doing us all proud. Thank you so much for that great collective effort and we're all pitching in, we're all helping out, and of course this weekend is also really crucial. So, I really hope that everyone acts responsibly. That they enjoy some of the lifting of the stay-at-home restrictions, that they can get out and see their family and friends, they can go for a picnic, go for a walk in a national park. If you're doing those recreational activities, it has to be roughly within 50 kilometres of your home, but this is going to be a great opportunity for Queenslanders to really get out and enjoy the fresh air. So, with those few words – I might just hand over to Steven and Dr Young and then we're happy to take some questions.

MINISTER MILES:

Thanks so much, Premier. Another zero day for Queensland, a fantastic result and a reward for our efforts so far. Our message today is this weekend, as we ease those restrictions, let's not mess it up. Let's keep it up. Let's keep getting those zero results. If everyone abides by the rules that have been outlined, if we keep our distance, even though we're now allowed to move around a bit more, if we keep to our household units, there's no reason why we shouldn't be able to sustain these very low number of cases. That brings us to just eight cases for the 7-day period. We still have 1033 in total. Less than 80 active cases. Most managed in the community, just 11 in hospital. We're down to four in intensive care and of course, that's fantastic news. There are still 2715 Queenslanders in quarantine right now, doing the right thing, keeping the rest of us safe and we thank them for that. It's now 100 days since Jeannette announced that COVID-19 was a public health matter of state-wide significance. It's 93 days since our first case. And the rest of the world is looking to Australia and Queensland and wishing they were in the position that we are in. In other countries, they're waking up to numbers in the thousands of new cases, new deaths every single night. We are very fortunate here in Queensland to be waking up to no new cases.

DR YOUNG:

No new cases overnight, which sets us up beautifully for this weekend. So, this weekend the first restrictions are being eased, which is fantastic. It's really important that people adhere to those so we know what we can do going forward. So if people adhere to those restrictions,

that is, within 50 kilometres of their home, they can leave their home for recreational purposes, with their own household group, or if they're going out by themselves, with one other person, so they can go on a picnic, they can go and do some shopping that isn't essential, they can go and ride a motorcycle, take a drive, you know, do those sorts of things. But it's really important that still, with social distancing, so that people still maintain that 1.5 metre distance between other people that they're not part of that household group, and if they're going into a shop, there's one person per four square metres. So I know the retail industry has done a brilliant job. So in most places, they're assisting you by saying out the front of their shop how many people can safely go into that shop. That's really important. We can't have mingling because that's when you can get transmission of cases. So really good news and hopefully it will be all perfect and we'll be able to have more restrictions eased as we go forward. Thank you

REPORTER:

Dr Young, just while you're there. Yesterday the ACT declared itself COVID free. What would it take for Queensland, given these numbers over the last week to be COVID free? Does it come down to no active cases?

DR YOUNG:

It does indeed. So for Queensland to be COVID free, we would have to have no active cases and we probably have to wait for two incubation periods to be sure so that we weren't having cases come forward that hadn't been picked up. It's really, really important that if anyone has any symptoms at all, of respiratory infection, cough, sore throat, fever, they immediately go and get tested. That's really important. So we can pick up every case. Because if we pick up every case, then we can work with the contacts of that case. And make sure that we don't have ongoing spread. So, it would be to declare ourselves as COVID free, we would need to have not only no active cases but two incubation periods following that.

REPORTER:

How long are you expecting these current measures to last before you re-evaluate?

DR YOUNG:

It will depend really on this weekend. So we'll immediately get feedback about what people have done. If we see large gatherings in places, that would concern us greatly and we'll have to re-think. If we don't, then we'll be able to fairly rapidly. Normally we need to wait two weeks, but given we know that these measures shouldn't cause any increased transmission, because essentially, it's the same group you live with at home that you're out with. In theory, we shouldn't have any problems. But we just have to see what people do to respond. Because it's actually going to be quite difficult, I mean, I don't underestimate it, if everyone decides on Saturday they want to go and buy a Mother's Day gift for the following weekend, we could have problems in our shops. So people need to use a lot of common sense, that where they go, they need to look around and think, is this actually safe? Have we got too many people here? And if there are too many, go away and come back.

REPORTER:

What does the 50 kilometre rule mean for those on the Gold Coast? Are they allowed to cross the border?

DR YOUNG:

If they cross the border and visit for one of those essential purposes then they'll have difficulty coming back. So they'll have difficulty coming back. I mean, crossing the border hasn't changed. All of those requirements are still in place.

REPORTER:

For people who are out on the water using boats. If they drive 50 kilometres, is their radius still another few kilometres? How does it work with the 50 kilometre rule?

DR YOUNG:

I think we can use a bit of common sense. I think that's fine.

REPORTER:

Staying locally?

DR YOUNG:

I think so, yes.

REPORTER:

How many calls from a lot of federal backbenchers from the regions to open up, lift restrictions in towns not touched by COVID-19?

PREMIER:

Yes. Yeah, well we're looking at those, like Dr Young said, those two incubation periods. We are working on a whole range of measures at the moment which I'll hope to update Queenslanders over the coming weeks. But also too one of the areas we're looking at is cafes and restaurants. We're going to be having detailed discussions with organisations during the course of next week and of course we're looking at what is COVID safe. Our general principle here is how is a café or restaurant COVID safe, how are shops COVID safe and how are schools COVID safe, so as long as we put in place all these measures and we continue to have that absolutely... flattening the curve, I call it smashing of the curve. We're doing a really good job and Queenslanders should be so proud of themselves.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] leaked audio surfaced overnight, are you embarrassed about that?

PREMIER:

Not at all. It's exactly what I said at Parliament in April. There's nothing new that's been said there.

REPORTER:

Premier, the Northern Territory, they haven't had a case in three weeks, are you considering opening that border up for people wanting to cross?

PREMIER:

Not at the moment because we do have a lot of indigenous communities that border on that particular border as well, Josh. So, of course we'll be reviewing everything, but I never thought we would be at this stage – I don't think Dr Young every thought we'd be at this stage – right now. So, we are able to see those lifting of those restrictions and of course it is the tremendous job that Queenslanders have been doing in flattening the curve.

REPORTER:

On the leaked audio, the Prime Minister has been calling for schools to open, do you think it is a bit unfair for him to do that if you think he won't get the blame in the end? If you think you and [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Patrick, it is nothing different to what I said in Parliament, go have a look at what I said in Parliament.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

I want the absolute paramount safety of our whole school community, and that means that it has to be COVID-safe and I am going to make sure that all of those measures are in place, and I have said very clearly that I absolutely am determined to get more teachers-student contact in the coming weeks.

REPORTER:

Jackie Trad has said that there will be no more hiring of public servants, you are obviously across that...

PREMIER:

Yes, we have to make these tough decisions and it would be irresponsible if we didn't. So, we know that we've got to make sure that our public service is functioning, and they are doing a terrific job during this, I've never seen people more responsive but of course we've got that wage freeze that will come in, and also too we can't be going out there randomly hiring people. We've got to take stock of where we are and focus on that economic recovery.

REPORTER:

On the NRL [inaudible] is that a decision you are expecting from the National Cabinet this morning?

PREMIER:

I am looking forward to the discussion this morning at the National Cabinet about elite sport, and I think we want to see workable plans, we want to see COVID-safe workable plans for sport as well. I am very encouraged by the submissions that have come in from a whole range of sporting codes and I am looking forward to a very positive discussion today.

REPORTER:

You mentioned discussions will be ongoing over coming weeks about restrictions easing, is it fair to say a roadmap will be released after that?

PREMIER:

We are working on that roadmap to recovery, absolutely.

REPORTER:

Premier, there's a Channel 7 schooling show that started today, are you excited about that? Did you have the tape in at home... home-schooling for kids?

PREMIER:

Yes, it is wonderful to see our commercial partners coming onboard to help with that home-schooling as well.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Channel 9, Premier.

PREMIER:

That's right, Channel 7 and Channel 9, and Channel 10 and the ABC, everyone is helping out, isn't that great to see? Creativity at its best.

REPORTER:

Again [inaudible] the Opposition is calling for this medical advice to be released again, that medical advice...

PREMIER:

It is on the website, and guess what? I take my advice from the Chief Health Officer and we are working collectively with all of the aspects of the school community to get an absolutely great outcome, but it has to be safe to return to school and that is exactly what we're working on.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference
Speaker/s: Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll
Date: 4 May 2020
Duration: 31 minutes

E&OE

PREMIER:

... large crowds around, please go somewhere else because we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and we need to look after you and your families. But the majority of people have been responsible and doing a really good job over the weekend. I know some of our retail centres have been bustling and it is good to see people going back in to the retail stores and spending money and making sure that we are continuing to drive employment in this state. So keep up the good work. Today I want to talk about our back to school plan, and of course this has been an issue for a lot of people and I know that it has been really tough on parents at home; many parents at home who have been juggling working and also the balance of ensuring that their kids are following the online learning. And if we want to get back to some form of normality in this state, we need to make sure too that we're looking after our kids, our teachers and the whole school community, and as I said very clearly, we were working on plans with the schools to ensure that the teachers are safe and abiding by that 1.5 metre distancing, especially in their tearooms and in their staffrooms and where they congregate, and also really good measures in place for school drop off and pick up, to make sure that parents are not going to be congregating around those school gates. So, having had extensive discussions, and let me say that once again, having had extensive discussions, I mean Minister Grace and I, I think we talk almost daily and we've had a lot of discussions and I really want to thank the minister for carrying out those stakeholder discussions during last week and reporting back to me nearly every single day. And I want to thank everybody in Queensland for working together, and this is from Catholic Education, to our P&Cs, to the independent schools, all of our state schools, the Principals' Association, there have been so many people who've been working towards this. Now of course our numbers are still low and that is the reason why we can now put in place these dates, and if we continue to have low numbers, then I am quite sure that we can meet these dates. And of course they are subject to change if we do get increases at all and sort of community transmission or any outbreaks. So, from May the 11th – and I know there is a lot of people who have been waiting for this, including my family members – from May the 11th, there will be kindy, prep and years 11 and 12 will be going back to school. So, this is great news and of course we know how important those early years are, we also know how important year and 11s and 12s are, especially when they're trying to finish that education, especially in year 12, it is a very important year, so from May the 11th, kindy and prep, years 11 and 12s will return to school. On May the 15th – that has always been our date for assessment – we are going to assess once again how our restrictions are working and how are numbers are going, and on May the 25th, that is our date for the proposed reopening to remaining students and grades across

Queensland. So, by the end of this month, May the 25th, we should where practicable have nearly all of our schools operating in Queensland. And of course I say that with caution because if there is any rise between now and May 25th, we have to act cautiously. But this is our plan, this is our plan for Queenslanders to give Queenslanders some certainty over the school year. Last night we had only three new cases, but they were largely, all three are from overseas, and Dr Young will talk a bit more about that. So we have seen really good numbers in Queensland and that is why we have been able to make this decision. But please everyone, every state is different, and every state has different levels of COVID-19 cases and they are at different stages. So you cannot compare different states to one another, but I am very pleased with this arrangement, I am quite sure it is going to benefit the whole school community, but also too then, we are absolutely focussed on how we can get people back into work as well, and that will be the focus of my discussions this week when I am meeting with a whole variety of stakeholders to set out a similar plan to this, and also don't forget that National Cabinet is also meeting twice this week to also look at what further restrictions can be lifted. So once again, thank you Queensland for all the work you've been doing, I know it's really tough, I know you're sick of it and I think a lot of people are sick of it, but we have to take it one step at a time and thank you for taking this journey with us and we will get there if we all stick together. I might get Minister Grace to say a few words and then Dr Young.

MINISTER GRACE:

Good morning everyone. Can I start by thanking the teachers and principals and staff at schools and all our stakeholders including the non-government sector – the independent and the catholic sector – for the way we've worked together to come about with this plan. Queensland state schools will return to the classroom in stages, starting on Monday, May 11, and that was in line with what the Premier announced in Parliament on April the 22nd when we sat on that Wednesday. These changes are in line with the health experts both here and in Queensland and I thank Dr Jeanette Young for consulting with me extensively and all other stakeholders in relation to this staged return to schooling. I am proud to announce that students in community kindy, in primary school – prep and year one – and in high school year 11 and year 12 will be the first to return to full classroom schooling on May the 11th. Schools will resume regular teaching and learning for students at these year levels as part of the phased return to school. Obviously the children of those essential workers and vulnerable children will be continuing and that is wonderful to also be able to accommodate. These children, obviously in prep and year one and kindy, in the early stages are important years and we want to make sure that we can get them in first, and I think the Premier also alluded to this in Parliament on the 22nd of April as well. And obviously the very important years of year 11 and 12, we've got those going in, first off, on May the 11th to full teaching. The remainder of the students will remain with remote learning, we've now had two weeks where teachers have been at schools, in the classroom, exercising social distancing and being able to work around the new arrangements that are not only in the health advice – the federal health advice – but also of course as part of the principles in relation to the National Cabinet decisions with regards to education. If low transmission rates continue, students in the years two to 10 will then be able to return to school from Monday the 25th of May. Now we always had a plan for the first half of this term, and from May the 25th if everything goes according to plan, the remainder of the students will be able to then attend full schooling as well. So just to confirm again, May 11, kindy, community kindy, they're all back as usual, and prep and

year one, and of course year 11 and 12 in high school. On May the 15th, we will reassess exactly where we're at so that if there are any peculiarities that may happen with COVID-19, if we have low transmissions don't continue, we will confirm that all on May 15, as we've always indicated that we would, but all going to plan, low transmissions continuing we are planning to have all children back in the classroom with full lessons from May 25. We recognise that there may be some parents who have children who are sick or are in vulnerable families, or are concerned about sending their children to school, we will obviously accommodate those and they will obviously need to work with their schools and continue their remote learning. We will continue to accommodate vulnerable staff who are in that position where they may not be able to attend classes, and they will be working from home and undertaking various tasks in relation to this plan going forward. But, it is also important that in accordance with the national health guidelines that students and staff that are unwell do not attend school. It is absolutely imperative that if we get through this period with low transmissions – we've had two weeks now of teachers back at school with essential worker and vulnerable children – we've had no cases, if we are to continue this low transmission rate, it is important that if you are unwell, please do not attend school if you're a staff member or a student. Obviously we will put in place physical distancing, but it is very important also that we give schools this week to work around the stop, drop off and pick up and how that can be done safely and that parents can feel confident that they can drop their children off in a safe environment, and that is much better to do with preppies and year one if we have fewer students at the school and we can organise that stop, drop and go area, and I know that principals are working with us to do that. Can I thank everyone for working on this? We will continue the increased cleaning of all of those surfaces, light switches, door handles, toilet areas, we will continue with not having large assemblies and school excursions and all of those protocols in place as well. We understand that with Dr Young's assistance, she is very comfortable with our plan going forward, but it is always in line with the protocols that have been set by the AHPPC and the seven principles that National Cabinet agreed with. And I thank Dr Young and the Premier who we've worked extensively last week to come up with this plan which we believe will work very Queensland, as we're in a bit of a different situation to New South Wales and Victoria. I must admit I got concerned this morning when I heard about the case in a Victorian school, and a New South Wales school, but I know they're looking to do contact tracing there to find where those cases had eventuated from. But we believe this is a good plan, fully endorsed by all our stakeholders and by Dr Young and we look forward to implementing it. Thank you.

DR YOUNG:

We had three new cases overnight in Queensland, and although we're going through and confirming where they attained these cases, at the moment we believe one case was contracted in London, one in Los Angeles and one on a cruise ship, so we'll just sort that through. That means we're now 1038 cases in Queensland. Now I understand from the police that in the main, people adhered to the restrictions over the weekend. There were a few examples where that didn't occur, but in the vast majority of cases people heard, and were very careful, and that is important. As we can see with these three cases and what we've seen in Victoria and New South Wales, there are still cases in our community that we have to be careful about, so we do need to, as much as possible, maintain social distancing. Now, it is excellent news that our schools can start returning to normal on May 11 and a lot of work will need to be done

next week with parents and schools to sort out those areas that I'm most concerned about, which is actually drop off and pick up. That is when people congregate, that's when adults congregate and that is actually the biggest risk in all this, but I am sure that that will all be sorted out beautifully between parents and the schools. So that work will happen next week, then we'll be able to see those younger children, who I am most worried about with those pick up and drop offs, get all of those arrangements sorted while there are still fewer children at school, and then we will also be able to have our year 11 and 12 – who of course understand social distancing and most importantly of all understand if they've got any symptoms at all that they need to stay home – and that is really important. Now, over the last 24 hours we've only seen 950 Queenslanders tested for COVID-19, I suspect that is because we actually don't have a lot of respiratory disease in our community because everyone is socially distancing. But please, I just push forward with that message, could anyone who is feeling at all unwell please go and get tested, see their GP – perhaps GPs weren't open yesterday, which of course led to some of that reduction in testing – if your GP is not open, then attend a fever clinic or a hospital. It is really important, those two things, if you're unwell, stay at home, if you're unwell, get tested. They're the two most important things, if we all follow we'll manage this and we'll be able to continue to lift restrictions as we go forward. Thank you.

DR LEANNE PERRY:

Catholic Education is delighted with the news that the Premier has announced this morning of the return of students to year 11 and 12 and community kindys, year one and prep starting on May the 11th. We think it is a very proportionate response. Our early years' students need to have that connection back with their school communities, and certainly our year 11 and 12 students who are moving through the new QCE system want to reconnect with their schools to get the reassurance that they need to complete these very important years. Our schools are well prepared for the return of students, they will work very closely with their parent bodies to ensure that all the protocols that are required, as Dr Young has outlined this morning, happen, our teachers are well supported and we can also, of course, continue to support the students who are learning at home. So we're delighted that students are moving back and we are very hopeful to see all of our students back at school on the 25th of May.

P&C SPOKESPERSON:

P&C's Queensland has been very pleased to be working with the department, they've been keeping us in the loop on everything and P&C's and parents across the state have really been stepping up with the learning from home and the resources that the government has been providing and working with the parent community, the universities and what not, to really support parents learning from home, and the way the teachers have been involved in that, in supporting that, has been fantastic. But P&Cs Queensland is really supportive of this move to get schooling back to normal, the staged approach is very sensible and the consultation that has been done has been fantastic. And giving parents that choice as well, if they're not comfortable, they can still keep their kids at home longer if they like without having absentee marks. And we've seen P&C communities really stepping up as well, in how they can get tuckshops running still to support parents, or getting their outside school hours care going as well. So, there has been lots that the parent community have been stepping up within the

school to support parents who are on the frontlines and don't have that flexibility and so we're really happy and looking forward to this staged return that is happening now.

WADE HAYNES:

This news will provide our staff with the opportunity and the time to be agile, to adjust what they have been doing for the last couple of weeks and make sure that they're ready for the graduated transition of the students back into full-time schooling. It is what they do everyday, the teachers have done an amazing job over the last few weeks in providing students with a variety of curriculum, offerings and through a variety of mediums to it is another pivot and change to address this new scenario that we'll have from May 11.

REPORTER:

Would you expect to see any cases, or a case at all with kids coming back to school?

PREMIER:

It completely depends on what happens. Like Dr Young says, we haven't seen much respiratory cases at the moment, people are socially distancing, I think she's even quoted in the past we would see 900 cases of flu a week, we're getting maybe nine in Queensland. But of course, this is something none of us have had to deal with before and we've got to take every step as it comes.

REPORTER:

Premier, last week you were saying that May 15 was the date that you would make a decision, this is much earlier, are you responding to community debate about this, pressure from parents, can you take us through why....

PREMIER:

Sure, thanks Michael, and as I always said, it depends on how our cases have been going. So we have been watching that very closely, and of course, we speak with Dr Young nearly every day or every second day. We've had extensive consultation with this to get this right, our back to school plan, but also too, let me make it very clear, I understand that parents are finding it incredibly difficult at the moment to be balancing working from home and also ensuring that their kids are getting the online schooling. So, I think we've got the balance right here, and once our schools are back, we can then absolutely focus on getting our economy back, we can focus on getting people back into work, we can focus on the cafes and the restaurants, we can focus on mining developments. We can continue to make sure that we are going to get our economy up and going, because we know this is going to have a devastating impact if we don't act.

REPORTER:

How are you expecting to see this return? Is it like we've had a large holiday? How will the catch-up work?

PREMIER:

It's no holiday Josh, because people have actually been doing online schooling, and I really want to thank everyone. And the amount of work, like our teachers have been flat out, they've been doing all their home lessons, they've been doing the videos – I couldn't even speak to my sister the other day, she was doing her video for her classes for this week – so look, I understand that it has been a lot of stress on everybody, and this is our plan. Now, we know that there may be some hiccups along the way, but this is a measured and responsible plan that we are taking to the Queensland community.

REPORTER:

So term two won't restart, it'll just continue as it has?

PREMIER:

Yes, it is continuing on, but with the May 25th is our ambition to have everyone back in schools across Queensland.

REPORTER:

It seems there are people in different sides of the camp, are you expecting much of a pushback?

PREMIER:

I think everyone understands that we've got to get the balance right, and as I've always said, I take the advice of Dr Young, and Dr Young is one of our most respected health medical officers in the nation, and she has been closely involved with every step of the decision making that I take. And if you're not listening to the experts, I don't know who you're listening to. So, I think we've structured this correctly and I ask parents to please come with us on this journey and hopefully we'll have all of our schools back, and hopefully it will be without incident. But, we always have to have the 'what-if' and if there is an outbreak, or there is community transmission then our plans may change. I have to be honest about that.

REPORTER:

What do you mean your plans will change? Would you shut it, pull them out again?

PREMIER:

For example, if there was an outbreak in a school, we would have to close that school down, do the deep cleaning and everything, but we have plans in place. So as the Prime Minister has been saying, we need to have a rapid response plan in place, and that is exactly what we've done.

REPORTER:

So has the health advice changed? You were so clear that May 15 would be that decision day, and now it's...?

PREMIER:

We've had such good numbers over the last week, okay, and it looks like it is going to be continuing. So, as I said, that May 15 is that crucial date to actually get an analysis of how

we've been going over the previous two weeks, to then make that decision for the May 25. That is our intention at this stage, May 25, everyone back at school.

REPORTER:

Apart from the good numbers, Premier, do you accept that community pressure and some of the debate going on has also [inaudible].

PREMIER:

It is always the health advice, I have to be honest about that, I take the health advice, but I also respect that it has been a difficult juggling act for parents. It has been very difficult for parents and we want to get normality back, and also too, I think there's issues too with our children. Many of our children are going through periods of feeling isolated, wanting to see their friends, wanting to be in the classroom, and I have always said I wanted to see more teacher-student contact. I have been saying that in the Parliament and now I am delivering that, so it is no different to what I said. I said we would look at the early years and year 11 and 12, I have done that. It is no different to what I've been saying.

REPORTER:

Premier, [inaudible] help the economy. When do you expect to release a road to recovery for business, more broadly?

PREMIER:

That should be in the next week or two because National Cabinet is looking at those levels of restrictions. I don't want to pre-empt National Cabinet, but we're doing a lot of work on that as well.

REPORTER:

Do you understand why some businesses might be frustrated that you can't publicly release it yet?

PREMIER:

We have to put in place COVID safe plans. So I have been, once again, getting all the health advice as well. These are very big decisions everyone, and we've got to get the health advice and we've got to make sure we get it right, and then of course we'll be announcing our plan, just as I've announced this plan. I will be announcing our path to recovery plan as well.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] infrastructure spending be as part of that road out of this, whether it be federal money or state money?

PREMIER:

I think you will see there is going to be a good combination of state and federal, I mean we have got one of the largest infrastructure spends, around \$10 billion a year, and works have been happening. But what we may see is some acceleration of those works, where possible,

and of course we'll be talking with the mayors and the local governments association as well about what things we can fast-track, especially in our regions.

REPORTER:

How can Queensland Rail justify such a huge overtime bill when patronage is down 80 per cent?

PREMIER:

I think our rail system needs to operate, Lane, just as its operating in Melbourne and as it is operating in Sydney, and my understanding is the overtime rates are about eight per cent down from last time. So, that is good, and of course we've got to get our essential workers to and from their workplaces, so once again, we are starting to return back to some level of normality, schools will be going back, we will be looking at other workplaces that can go back in the next couple of months as well, and it is very hard to shut down a system and then open it up again as well. But once again, I want them to keep downward pressure on those wages as well.

REPORTER:

And what did you make of those scenes on Burleigh Hill yesterday, that was quite extraordinary?

PREMIER:

I saw those, and once again the majority of people are doing the right thing, and we cannot be relaxed, and as I said, if it is crowded, forget it.

REPORTER:

The gas industry last week wrote to you asking the government to delay its hike in gas royalties, saying that it is the worst time for local manufacturers to have to face greater gas prices, what's your response?

PREMIER:

I haven't seen that letter, I am happy to have a look at that letter. But what I can say about the gas industry is that they have a lot of confidence in investing in Queensland, because we had the recent announcement of the \$10 billion worth of investment, and that investment decision was actually taken in the midst of this pandemic, it wasn't a decision that they had taken years ago. Their shareholders actually made that decision to invest for domestic and international gas, here in Queensland, just a few weeks ago.

REPORTER:

70 per cent of domestic gas use is from manufacturing in Queensland, do you think it is the time to raise their gas prices?

PREMIER:

I will have to look at the letter, I am happy to look at the letter Michael.

REPORTER:

Cafes and bars want to be open by June, is that feasible?

PREMIER:

I think June is a good ambitious target. So I am going to be speaking to some of their representative associations this week, I can't say whether it is early June or late June, but I am going to have those discussions. As Dr Young has said, we've got to take these things a couple of weeks at a time, we can't do it all at once, we've got to take a couple of steps, see how it goes – which is what we're doing with schools – and of course then the next step will be those cafes and restaurants, I think.

REPORTER:

Do you expect there will be tax freezes of some sort as part of that roadmap to recovery for businesses here in Queensland?

PREMIER:

We will look at that when we release it, Jack.

REPORTER:

Do you think [inaudible] restrictions for Mother's Day next weekend?

PREMIER:

I'll have to get advice from Dr Young on that one.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] changes and flexibility?

PREMIER:

If your mother lives beyond that 50 kilometres, you can visit friends and family outside that 50 kilometres. So that 50 kilometres is for recreational purposes.

REPORTER:

So what about the border? When are we going to open up the border?

PREMIER:

We will review our border restrictions every month. At the end of every month we will review that and at the moment there is no plans to change that because we are still seeing cases that have come into Queensland from those hotspots. So once we see those hotspots clear of community transmission, that is when I think there will be reason to look at that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] what is community kindy?

PREMIER:

Community kindergarten? They're not attached to the schools. So people can send their kids, there's all different organisations...

REPORTER:

It's not day care is it?

MINISTER GRACE:

Community kindy is generally those that aren't attached to a long day care centre and that operate independently. Some of them are very close to schools, some of them are on school grounds, but separate, and they provide a fantastic service right throughout Queensland. And we have invested \$17 million to make them free for term two and now those community kindys are able to return, like the long day care centres are able to as well. So we're very proud to be able to get them back in, as well as our preppies and year ones.

REPORTER:

Minister, just quickly, students with disabilities, how are they being taken care of right now? Are you expecting any to come back into the classroom?

MINISTER GRACE:

Yes, those in prep and year one and those in 11 and 12 will be going back the same as everybody else, and those special schools are doing a fantastic job in accommodating those students. And they are working very closely with the families and being very accommodating to those vulnerable children.

REPORTER:

What about TAFE?

MINISTER GRACE:

That is not my ministerial responsibility, but that is obviously something that we'll be working towards with TAFE. TAFE, they are normally all adults, so social distancing is a little bit different to schools, where amongst children social distancing isn't required, it is the adults in the school that need to social distance. With TAFE they are generally mostly adults and it is difficult to, I guess, deliver some of those courses in an environment where you must continue to social distance. But, Dr Jeanette Young might be able to...

REPORTER:

Before you step aside, and you may have answered this before, but what is your thinking on assessment? I mean these kids have had a disrupted school year, some are in very important years and some need... benefit more from face-to-face, can you tell us what you're thinking there?

MINISTER GRACE:

Obviously there will be a modified assessment for term two, and we're working with the schools for that modified assessment, we'll be working in ensuring that parents and carers get the information that they require about the progress for their child, but the QCAA is also

doing fantastic work with all stakeholders, and Dr Leanne Perry from the Catholic Education Commission is on the QCAA board, as well as the independent schools and they are working towards the assessment for 12 this year. We will not have a year 13, they will all receive an ATAR – those who want to go for an ATAR – and they will all receive their QCE, obviously modified, but we're nationally. Queensland chairs the national body and we are coming up with a fantastic assessment plan for those students so they are not disadvantaged.

REPORTER:

Excuse my ignorance Minister, do they still sit a QCS test under the new system?

MINISTER GRACE:

No.

REPORTER:

So is there one big test [inaudible]?

MINISTER GRACE:

Yes, there will be an external test towards the end of the year, and obviously that board which Dr Leanne Perry is on as well, are working towards the best way that we can implement that. It is around the end of October, early November date, so we don't know where we're going to be at that stage, but the QCAA is working on all arrangements and alternatives in regards to that, but we hope that all those students who are aspiring for an ATAR score will get one. There will not be a 13th year and we've accommodated the learning for them to be properly assessed on a national scale.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Health Minister Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 5 May 2020

Duration: 10 minutes 14 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

Okay, well in some more good news for Queensland overnight we've only had five more cases. But three of them are old cases from other states, so it's just a bit of data cleansing. One is a close contact of someone in Metro South and one new case is on the Gold Coast, and we'll get some more information overnight about that one on the Gold Coast and Dr Young can talk to you a little bit more about that. But that's wonderful news to hear that we are really flattening that curve, so thank you, Queensland, for everything that you're doing. So, look, I'll hand over to Steven to say a few words and, of course, our testing rates are still going well - over 117,000 tests across Queensland. And of course we have very few active cases, so everything is looking bright here in Queensland. So I'll hand over to Steven and then Dr Young. Thanks, Steven.

MINISTER MILES:

Thank you, Premier. That's right, overnight we're confirming five additional cases, but three of those relate to earlier cases that had been recorded in other states. As other states identify cases within their reports that relate to Queensland residents, they advise us of that and at that point in time, those numbers come off that state's record and get added to Queensland's. That means we now have 57 active cases here in Queensland. 980 people have now recovered from COVID-19. In the last 24 hours, we tested 1069 people. That number has been dropping slightly as the number of people with all kinds of respiratory illnesses has been dropping across the state. So Dr Young will speak in a moment about how important it is that anyone in the state goes and gets tested. It's easy. It's free. There's lots of places you can do it and we would encourage anyone with any kind of respiratory symptom go and get tested. Of our cases, nine are currently in hospital. They're all in either the Gold Coast, Metro North or Metro South, so right here in the south-east. Four are in intensive care but just one is ventilated.

DR YOUNG:

So five new cases overnight in Queensland added to our data, but three of them were actually acquired or picked up interstate. So they'll be added to our numbers and taken off their numbers. So there are actually two new cases, really, in Queensland, one of them in the Gold Coast – and we're still working through where that individual contracted the infection – and the other in Brisbane, who was a household contact of a known case. So that's good news.

What happened over the weekend, I understand, was very good, that most people heard the messaging and were very, very responsible. So that will aid us as we go forward. So it is important to recognise that we are still getting the occasional case and if we don't manage that, and we have more people out and about, it could be a risk. So that's why it's so important that people, wherever possible, maintain that 1.5 metre distance, and if they're unwell with any symptoms at all, stay home and go and get tested. We have seen a slow decline in the number of people coming forward to be tested and I'm sure that's because we're not seeing respiratory disease in our community, so people are well, so don't feel the need to be tested. But definitely, if you've got any symptoms at all, please, this is really, really important. Don't stay at home. Come forward and get tested. Because then we can, if it is COVID-19, make sure we immediately contact-trace anyone you've come into contact with. Remember, for the vast majority of people, this is a mild disease, so that's why you need to be attuned to any symptoms and come and get tested. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Can I ask you about border restrictions? This morning, obviously, you were speaking about how you were open to the idea [inaudible], but what about travel interstate plans? When is that going to be allowed to [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Look, we review the border restrictions at the end of every month and I can't see that happening any time soon. But, of course, we've got to take it one step at a time. As Dr Young always says, you lift some restrictions, you examine it for two weeks and then you can look at lifting further restrictions. Of course, this week, I'll be starting a lot of conversations with heads of the cafes and the restaurant associations. I'll also be speaking with tourism operators as well, to put in place our clear road map to recovery. It is really important that, once we have settled our plan for schools, that now we can focus on our plan for Queensland's economic recovery, including jobs. And of course great news today in terms of the \$1 billion dollar Varsity Lakes to Tugun expansion of the motorway. Some concrete barriers will go up and of course that's hundreds of jobs for the Gold Coast but we are looking at those recovery plans right across Queensland, especially regional Queensland as well as the south-east.

REPORTER:

Tourism operators are crying out for some sort of road map or clear signs...

PREMIER:

Yes, and the work is under way, absolutely under way. And we'll be speaking with those operators this week as well to look at what are those mechanisms that need to be put in place, especially, you know, COVID-safe for different types of accommodation.

REPORTER:

But the borders will be a crucial part of reopening the tourism industry isn't it?

PREMIER:

Yes, but what it might be Lane first and foremost, is it might be Queensland supporting Queenslanders. So it might be, you know, short-term accommodation initially, but we need to take this cautiously and, of course, National Cabinet is looking the what restrictions can be lifted and some time frames around that.

REPORTER:

So you're suggesting Queenslanders might be able to move around Queensland?

PREMIER:

That would be probably the first step, yes.

REPORTER:

Premier, what would your message be to cafes and restaurants now, what can they do now [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yeah, well, we'll be speaking with them this week and what I would be hoping they would start formulating is COVID-safe plans. So what does it mean in this new COVID world to open up safely? And of course that's looking at how many patrons they can have in, what we've seen in other countries is outdoor areas opening up first, so of course we'll be looking at all those measures and as we put in place our plan for schools, we will have our plan for cafes and restaurants. We'll have our plan for tourism, our recovery road map for the future.

REPORTER:

Does that mean, Premier, that even if we see these things start opening that social distancing is still going to be here for quite a long time?

PREMIER:

Yeah, social distancing will be here for quite a long time, Alison, until we have a vaccine. I mean, I think everyone needs to understand that and I think everyone is abiding by those social distancing mechanisms.

REPORTER:

Premier as you'd be aware a lot of the businesses are having [inaudible] dates and that timeframe, should we expect...

PREMIER:

National Cabinet is looking at all of that this week so I would hope that... I mean, the Prime Minister has publicly said from May 11 he was looking at lifting some restrictions. And different states are going to be at different parts of those timetables, so we'll be looking at all of that, overlaying it with our health advice here in Queensland, and of course it's really important that we flatten that curve.

REPORTER:

Can you give us some idea of the protocols around school drop off and pick-ups? What will be in place in various schools?

PREMIER:

Yeah well it's up to each individual school because it depends where their drop off and pick up is, but of course parents will not be able to go into the school grounds. It'll be at the gate. It may involve either students just leaving their car, their vehicle. In some circumstances for those really younger preppies and kindies, of course it might be just walking to the school gate but being socially distanced from one another.

REPORTER:

Premier, what's your plan with Parliament this month?

PREMIER:

Yes. Well of course we adjourned to I think it was roughly the 18th, the week beginning the 18th, and that's our plan at the moment.

REPORTER:

Three-day sitting?

PREMIER:

Yes, it'll be a full sitting week. A full sitting week of Parliament.

REPORTER:

With the Northern Territory opening up pubs soon, what are you doing in the north west part of our state to make sure people aren't flooding over there to go to pubs?

PREMIER:

Yeah, as I said we'll put in place our very clear plan and of course National Cabinet is looking at some of those measures as well.

REPORTER:

I got a question for Dr Young.

PREMIER:

Yeah, sure. Thanks.

REPORTER:

Doctor, what kind of approvals have you been giving for people putting forward requests to travel around the state or interstate?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, so based on necessity. So if someone puts forward a request for an exemption and it's clearly something that's essential, and then I'll put some restrictions around it to protect people.



REPORTER:

Have there been many of those that you've been granting?

DR YOUNG:

There have been reasonable number, yes.

REPORTER:

And Dr Young, what's the advice for children who are in mainstream schools that have underlying conditions like cystic fibrosis?

DR YOUNG:

They should speak to their treating doctor about what is best for them and they should have a plan that they've discussed with the parents or carers, the children and the medical staff.

REPORTER:

This news that BUPA have now gone back and tried to cover this Columbian student in Brisbane, do you welcome that news?

MINISTER MILES:

I do welcome that news. It should never have come to this but it's good news that that student will get the treatment that they need and no doubt they will get world class care from our fantastic clinicians here in Brisbane.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press Conference, Brisbane

Speakers: Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk
Health Minister Steven Miles
Chief Health Officer Jeannette Young
Prevention of Domestic Violence Minister Di Farmer

Topic/s: COVID-19 response, Domestic violence prevention

Date: 6 May 2020

Duration: 15 minutes 24 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

Okay. In further good news for Queensland, zero new cases overnight, so well done Queensland. Keep it going and great result. So we want to keep seeing that curve being absolutely flattened. So we've got our total in Queensland is 1,043, and we only have 52 active cases, so that's wonderful news and I'm very pleased with those results. And over 120,000 tests and Minister Miles will go into a bit more detail about that.

Of course, tomorrow, we've got our meetings with representatives of cafes and restaurants and tourism operators, and of course a lot of work continues behind the scenes of making sure that we have our road map in place for the recovery for the future. So, of course, that is front and centre. We need to get people back to work. We need to get people back into jobs, and we will be absolutely focused on jobs right across Queensland getting people back into work over the coming weeks and months.

Well, today, also, my government is hosting a virtual summit on domestic and family violence, and it kicked off this morning with Minister Farmer and she's going to be talking a little bit more about that. I'll be joining the summit following this press conference but of course, we know that there's a lot of women out there that are being impacted by domestic and family violence. My government also announced previously an extra \$5.5 million going towards helping the services and today I'm pleased to announce that we will provide an extra \$2 million.

The services across Queensland have been inundated with calls for requests and we know that sometimes people being in confined places for long periods of time leads to distress. There are a lot of issues out there. And we want to make sure that we are supporting women and children as much as possible.

So today, over 120 people are joining our virtual summit. It's the first one we've ever done like this. But we believed it was absolutely important for this to go ahead. Of course, following on from the tragic deaths of Hannah and her children. I really want to thank people for joining the summit. Over 120 people from right across Queensland representing a

whole range of services, and we want to look to the future about what more we can do as a government and where we can target our funding, where it is needed the most. And, of course, our magistrates have also been inundated with issues around domestic and family violence. I know I've been speaking to magistrates myself, and they've been telling me that as well.

So, look, I'll hand over to Steven and then Dr Young, Minister Farmer will say a few words and we're happy to take some questions. Thanks, Steven.

MINISTER MILES:

Thank you, Premier. It's results like today's, no further COVID-19 cases, that will allow Queensland to continue to ease those restrictions, continue to allow us all to get back to life as normal.

As the Premier said, we now consider 52 of our cases currently active, just 52 across the state. 985 people have recovered. We were really pleased to see a rebound in the testing rate. In the last reported 24-hour period, we had 2,457 Queenslanders tested for COVID-19, getting closer to the kinds of testing levels we would like to see. Of our current active cases, nine are in hospital, four are in intensive care, three of those are ventilated.

From a health perspective, can I just say how important this domestic and family violence virtual summit is. I've been disturbed to hear from our emergency department staff that the reduction in sporting injuries and road trauma has been partially offset by trauma caused by domestic and family violence. Off course that's terribly disturbing for the people affected, and for our hospital staff, who deal with the aftermath of it. And so anything we can do to address this increase in domestic and family violence during the pandemic, I think, is really important.

DR YOUNG:

Well, no new cases overnight, which is excellent. So we saw the first reduction in restrictions last weekend. Next week, schools will start going back and then we'll be looking at what other reductions in those restrictions can occur, which is really good. There are a few things, though, that we all need to do so we can continue down this pathway. The first one, if you're sick, please stay at home and. That is critically important and in fact that is probably the most important thing we can all do. Stay at home and get yourself tested. That's very important. The second thing is, please, whenever you're out and about, if you can do it at all, maintain that 1.5 metre distance. That, also, is very important. You can't always do that but, where you can, please do it.

And wash your hands regularly. We have lots of hand sanitiser now available and, of course, washing your hands with soap and water is the best thing you can do. So if everyone does those things, we'll be able to continue down this pathway of removing the restrictions. Thank you.

MINISTER FARMER:

As the Premier has said today, we'll be hosting an Australian first, a virtual COVID-19 DV Summit. If you are a victim of domestic and family violence, life is already incredibly

challenging. With the advent of COVID-19, those challenges have increased dramatically. We've already heard the figures of a 75 per cent increase in the number of google searches for domestic violence services. If you are a victim, you are probably now at home 24 hours a day with a perpetrator who is watching your every move. So your ability to call for help, your ability to escape has become severely limited. Service providers have reported to us a dramatic increase in the brutality and severity of attacks. We know that perpetrators who are already violent will be even angrier as a likelihood of financial loss, from cabin fever. Lifeline reporting to us in general that people are more on edge and angrier, we've seen a 70 per cent increase in alcohol consumption. All of these things are creating a perfect storm in which the victim is in an heightened risk and if there are children involved, the long term impact on those children of exposure to domestic violence is enormous.

So today's Summit will be a game changer. We haven't waited until today to make changes but we will have experts from across the state, from across a range of areas of knowledge and experience to look at what are the key issues and how do we need to solve them now. Issues like how do we be visible to victims, whose only opportunity to call might be the two minutes that they spent behind a closed door in the toilet. Issues like how do we promote the services are available to women who are socially isolated. Do we do that in the supermarkets, hair dressers and the pharmacy because their world is a smaller place? How do we provide accommodation for victims and their children, who we can't leave hold up in hotel rooms for weeks on end if they are escaping violence? These are all really critical issues and these are the ones that we need to come out of today with solutions for.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

MINISTER FARMER:

I can report great excitement from service providers and experts across Queensland and what we're doing today. It's been described as a game changer. We've already devised solutions to the DV victims wanting to escape a violent situation, wanting to get out of their tenancies quickly. We've already worked with education to make sure that our children who are no longer in line of sight of teachers that they are actually looked after when they are so vulnerable stuck at home. We've already announced a partnership with Aria IQ to look at all of the vacancies that are currently available in service departments and AirBNBs so that we can actually move families into those options. There are a range of things and we are determined to make a difference today, we simply must do that and we won't be leaving until we've got those solutions.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

MINISTER FARMER:

Service providers are saying to us that they are very concerned that women are not making that choice. They are too fearful. They are fearful for example going to shelters and feeling like they and their children may be exposed to COVID-19. They are fearful of what



accommodation options there are. They are not able to access information about what services so many service providers are very concerned.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

MINISTER FARMER:

In a lot of ways, yes.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yes, that's tomorrow.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yes, we are talking to them as well but let me make it very clear. Nightclubs are much further down the track and we're talking to the Clubs Associations

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yes, I might get Dr Young to address that one in a bit more detail. But I'll take some other questions first.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yes, that's all down the track Lane so we have the road map and we're working on that road map and I'll release that and everyone will have those details.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yes, yes.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]



PREMIER:

No we don't because we don't have that data. So simply, can I absolutely urge everyone to sign up to the COVIDSafe app. My understanding was it was over 4 million people have already signed up nationwide but it's very important if we want to get our cafes and restaurants up and running. We really want to see as many people as possible have that COVIDSafe app. It's really, really important.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yes.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

We're discussing that at the moment but the absolute focus is on jobs, employment, getting people back into work and our COVID response.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Not yet. I've been flat out dealing with this.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

No. And Patrick, I haven't been to a faction meeting for years.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

No. Not at all. No.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Because I don't play factional games and frankly I don't have time for factional games, and I think everyone should be focused on dealing with this crisis. And it's very disappointing that people are focusing on that when my whole entire team should be focused on the coronavirus.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

No.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

No.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

No.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

We are working all of that out, but as you know there probably will either be an economic statement or a mini-Budget. We have to work all that out down the track once we can get a handle on how our economy is going.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I think it's important for any company to plan ahead, to think what could they do to make whatever it is that they're doing COVID-safe. And that's for any industry. I think it will be difficult for the cruise line industry to reassure people so they need to start that work now, because they will have a lot of work to do.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Not with the current arrangements, but I suspect a lot of people wouldn't. You've got to remember that five out of our six deaths in Queensland were related to people contracting the

infection on cruise ships. So as I said I think a lot of work will have to be done by the cruise ship industry before people will feel safe and be able to return.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] working from home should be eased somewhat or some companies?

DR YOUNG:

I think if you can work from home, and it works for both you and your employer, that you should consider continuing to do that. If it's not working for you or it's not working for your employer then it's time to think about going back to work but wherever possible maintaining that social distancing and also if too many people are going back to work at the same time then maybe starting to think about staggered starts and finishes for work.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] are you happy to see increased numbers in the CBD?

DR YOUNG:

I think it's good to see people out and about. We've seen that we've managed the case numbers so well in Queensland. We just have to be a little bit cautious as we go forward and be sensible about that, but I think that that's what people are doing.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It's something that we can look at but we're actually doing so well across the whole state that it mightn't be needed. But of course it's something we can look at. If we've got parts of the state that to go ahead and continue to not have any cases then perhaps it's something to consider. But I'll just stress that it's really important in fact as a nation that we all do this because otherwise we're not going to be able to remove those travel restrictions. And I think that's where we want to go.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Gold Coast [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No we haven't finalised yet exactly where that person contracted the disease.

PREMIER:

Alright, thanks everyone. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Minister Steven Miles, Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young, Minister Mark Ryan, Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll, Paul Mahoney, Minister Kate Jones

Date: 7 May 2020

Duration: 33 minutes 45 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

In further good news for Queensland, we've only had two additional cases overnight, and Dr Young will talk to you a bit more about that. They are from the Gold Coast, that takes our total cases to 1045, we only now have 50 active cases in Queensland – so that number keeps coming down – and once again, over 125,000 tests have been conducted. Now of course, this Sunday is Mother's Day and because Queensland has been doing such a great job, from Sunday we will be allowing up to five members to visit a household right across Queensland. So, that is great news for families. It must be from the same household, and I will get Dr Young to explain that, but I really want to thank Queenslanders for a great job that they've been doing right across our state, and I think that this is going to be welcomed by families, especially on Mother's Day, starting this Sunday. So I'll hand over to Steven Miles and then Dr Young.

MINISTER MILES:

Thanks so much Premier, just two cases confirmed overnight of COVID-19, taking us to 1045 in total for Queensland, 50 of those cases are active. We are really pleased to report that our testing rate has again increased, we are now at 4665 Queenslanders tested. There are just eight patients in hospital right now, three of them are in intensive care, all of them are receiving ventilation. Of course, those very low numbers are what allows us to continue to ease those restrictions and I am sure mums right across the state will celebrate the fact that on Mother's Day they will be able to welcome their families in single household groups to visit them for Mother's Day, all very special. No doubt, all Queenslanders are thinking today of five men who were injured doing their job yesterday. I just want to honour the work of aeromedical evacuation teams. They did incredible work overnight, those men are now at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in what is one of the world's best burns units. Four are in critical condition, one is serious, and I am sure all Queenslanders are thinking of them today.

DR YOUNG:

Two new cases in Queensland overnight of COVID-19. Both at the Gold Coast, one of them related to a cruise ship, the other we're still tracking through what... where that person

acquired the infection. So that is really good news, so we're not seeing an increase in cases and we need to keep it that way so we can continue to remove the restrictions. So it is good news that this Sunday that one family of up to five people can go and visit another family. So that is important, it is about two households coming together and we don't think that will increase risk. And we can do that in Queensland because of the great job everyone has been doing. We saw last weekend there were a few little breakouts, but in the main, people heard the message loudly. The other message that people have heard that is so important is if you've got any symptoms, it doesn't matter how mild they are, to go and get tested. And 4500 Queenslanders did that yesterday which was fantastic. So please, if you feel at all unwell, any symptoms at all of COVID-19, immediately go and get tested. That is very important. Then the other things that, of course, are also important that I think everyone has heard and is doing very effectively is we need to maintain social distance so 1.5 metres, and in indoor spaces or indeed even outdoors, one person per four square metres, and wash your hands with soap and water if you can use it, otherwise hand sanitiser, and a lot of hand sanitiser is now available, so thank you.

REPORTER:

So five people can go and visit another household, is there a limit on how many people that are in that household.

DR YOUNG:

No.

REPORTER:

So there could be up to 10, 15 people in the household at the one time?

DR YOUNG:

That is right. So it is about five people, maximum, of one family group, one household group going to another household group.

REPORTER:

And are they able to go beyond the 50k limit?

DR YOUNG:

If you're visiting another household, you can, you've always been able to, but you can't go out into that community. You can only go to that residence, visit there, and leave. You can't go shopping, you can't go to the beach, you can't go further in that community. It is all about one household meeting with another household.

REPORTER:

And so can I just check, does that mean give people that currently live in a house together can go to someone else's place, does that mean for a family group brother and sister in those house, brother in this house with kids etc, can all come together?

DR YOUNG:

No. It's about one household going to another household. You can split it up so I am sure there's a lot of mums out there who'd love to see one household in the morning and another in the afternoon, and another in evening. That could happen, but they can't all go at the same time. So it is about one household with another household.

REPORTER:

And that is expected to last from Sunday onwards?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Of course, all of these things are dependent on people hearing the message and continuing to do the great job they've done. If all of a sudden, we end up with a lot of problems or a lot of cases, then we'd have to rethink. But I expect that won't happen, I expect people will follow that guidance and it'll work.

REPORTER:

We're seeing a lot more traffic on the roads, especially in the morning coming into the city. On the M1 this morning, coming into Brisbane was pretty much looking normal. Are you seeing more people coming to work, going to shops, out and about?

DR YOUNG:

Yes we are, and that is what we expected to see, and this is all part of our strategy to get society, as much as possible, back to as much as it can do. It won't be where we were pre-COVID, that won't happen for quite a while down the track, but we'll gradually see things moving back towards more normal business.

REPORTER:

What is your message to people who might be seeing all these other people on the roads, shops reopening, everything and thing 'okay, we're getting back to normal' and might be a bit complacent, what would you say to those people?

DR YOUNG:

The most important thing for everyone so we can continue doing this is if you feel unwell, stay home. That is just so critical. I can't stress that enough. Stay home if you're unwell and get yourself tested. And if everyone does that, if all five million Queenslanders commit to doing that, we will be able to move steadily move towards a far more normal way of society operating. Do that, number one, then number two, wherever possible, maintain distance. It is not always possible, of course it isn't, but wherever it is, if you have an option of maintaining distance or not, choose to maintain distance. Don't touch other people unless it is required as part of your work or you're in your own household. Really maintain that 1.5 metre distance, one person per four square metres and wash your hands regularly. If everyone does all that, we'll be able to keep moving towards our goal.

REPORTER:

New South Wales tested more than 10,000 people yesterday, are you happy with our levels of testing here in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

I am not happy with our level of testing, I would like to do more and more and more testing. That's why it's my most important message. I suspect it's actually because we don't have a lot of illness out there. I think that's probably more the issue than the people deliberately not testing. I'm just saying to everyone that little niggle of a sore throat, that little niggle and it's a bit hard at the moment because it's coming into the cold weather so maybe people are getting runny noses but you know, got a runny nose, got a sore throat, if you've got a cough, definitely if you've got a fever, just go and get tested. We have got a lot of capacity to test now so let's use it. That's the most important strategy. I know it's a big ask because when you get tested, you then need to isolate until you get the result, so that's a big ask but I'm sure that employers would far prefer for you to be at home or schools you definitely prefer children to be at home while they wait for those results rather than to risk of them coming in to workplace, coming in to schools or coming into shops and spreading the infection.

REPORTER:

What about remote communities, I'm thinking Palm Island and those indigenous communities in the north and the west. Is there any relaxation around them?

DR YOUNG:

Well they can also do everything else, but they have to do it within the limits of their boundary. There is that Act in place that limits who can go in and out of those communities and they all need to understand what the boundary is for them and it varies enormously for each community. Within that community, they can off course do what anyone else is able to do but they can't cross except for some very specific reasons.

REPORTER:

Just a bit further on one household visiting another, should they social distance in that house then? Can you hug mum on Mother's Day if you're visiting?

DR YOUNG:

You should wherever possible, it's really important that you maintain that social distance, except within your own household. Yes, when you go and visit because we all want to keep our mums safe, I know I do, so it's a good idea to delay those hugs until we get through this. Within a household, off course hugging each other but if you have got different households coming together, try and maintain that social distance. It's being that extra cautious but very appropriate.

REPORTER:

When do you expect childcare centre to re-open fully?

DR YOUNG:

They are now fully open so yes, children can go back to childcare if they have for some reason not being going but yes, they've remained open throughout.

REPORTER:

When do you expect the testing of asymptomatic people to begin and how will that and when will that begin?

DR YOUNG:

Right, we've been having that discussion at a national level. It's a very, very important one because we don't want to do it randomly, that's not going to help us make decisions. We really want to do it very strategically and sort that through. That is the discussion happening at a national level and we've started that planning here at the state level as well.

REPORTER:

Can I ask you on the regions again, there's a lot of public, especially in remote towns who rely on tourism, when are they going to be opened up?

PREMIER:

All will be revealed after National Cabinet.

REPORTER:

I thought you'd say that, but would you like to see them opened as soon as possible? Send some sort of message.

PREMIER:

I'll be able to tell everybody after National Cabinet, I'm looking forward to Friday.

REPORTER:

Premier, just on...

PREMIER:

Yeah, hang on. Can we maybe just keep running the press conference the way we've been running it. So, if there's no questions for Dr Young and Steven, I now want to bring in the Police Commissioner and the Police Minister. We will do other questions at the end of the conference.

REPORTER:

I was just asking about some footballers and anti-vaccine..

PREMIER:

You want to talk to Dr Young about it.

REPORTER:

No, no, you. The Prime Minister says they should sit out the season if they don't have the flu shots, do you agree with that?

PREMIER:

Look, I think they have to take the health advice, but you know, we are encouraging everyone to get that flu vaccine for protection and they should be listening to the health advice as well.

REPORTER:

Just on the flu vaccine - and the Minister might be able to help me out - apparently Mount Isa has run out of vaccinations. They ordered more but because there's been such an uptake, have you got any information?

MINISTER MILES:

National supplies of the flu vaccine are well and truly sufficient for our population and likely uptake but there have been some regional sporadic shortages. People should ask their doctor or pharmacist to let them know when they have supplies back in and re-visit getting their flu vaccination at that time. Did you want to add to that Jeanette?

DR YOUNG:

We've got to remember when the flu season arrives, it always arrives in the south and goes up north so it's actually a good thing to have the flu vaccine a little bit later up north. I am not concerned about it, I haven't heard about that issue, but I know that we are getting flu vaccine out the door every single day. That will be replenished, there won't be an issue.

PREMIER:

Alright, if I can get just the Police Minister first and the Police Commissioner. Okay, so thanks everyone. Today we want to show you a video that highlights how important our staff on the frontline are. And without the Care Army and our fantastic police officers, Erika may not have survived this ordeal. So I'll hand over to I think Brett, are you going to start the video? We'll show the video and then the Police Minister and the Police Commissioner would like to comment on that, and then we'll bring in Kate Jones and Paul.

[VIDEO PLAYS]**PREMIER:**

Well I hope that story moves you because it definitely moved me. And I'll hand over to the Police Minister to talk about the work of the police and the Police Commissioner, but well done everyone and Erica is still with us today.

MINISTER RYAN:

Thanks very much, Premier. And firstly just a little message to Erica. I've been told she's been feeling down the last couple of days. Well Erica, you don't just have the Police Service thinking about you, you don't just have the Care Army thinking about you, but I'm sure today when Queenslanders see this on the TV news you'll have five million Queenslanders thinking of you and wishing you well. Look we all know an Erica and we all know that in times like this they need a little bit of extra help. In the darkness sometimes we need to be reminded of the kindness, the compassion of the human condition, and what you saw from our officers on that video just now is something that they actually do every single day. Our police here in Queensland don't just serve Queenslanders with honour, they also serve with compassion. And I'm very proud of our officers. Those are two officers from the Beaudesert Police Station. They just didn't go about their job rescuing Erica from this predicament, but they also showed that compassion that we expect from our officers, and that compassion which

I'm sure Erica was very grateful for. So to our officers, thank you for what you do day in day out looking after Queenslanders. Thank you for going the extra mile. I know that during this current time our police are doing extra work. They're doing work that they've never done before from manning borders to responding to requests from the Care Army to visit people like Erica. And I've got to say that without the Government's initiative of the Care Army, the police would probably have never known that Erica needed help. So it was the Government's initiative around establishing the Care Army, it was the magnificent volunteer at the Care Army who recognised that Erica needed help, and of course it was our police who responded with such urgency as well. And I'm sure you were all very impressed with the door kicking abilities of our officer in this video. To our police, thank you. To the Care Army, thank you. And to all Queenslanders, just a little message: in the darkness, don't forget that we can all still show a little bit of kindness, a little bit of compassion and a little bit of care for one another. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

Good morning everyone and what a wonderful video to see and thankfully it is a good news story for Erica. What you saw is what happened in Beaudesert at the end of April but that's happening every day around the state with the Care Army and our police working together knocking on doors to make sure that our vulnerable and our elderly are very, very safe. Interestingly my own parents who are 92 and 84 got a phone call from the Care Army and they were chuffed, couldn't be happier. And in fact, also got a visit at Easter time from police and the Care Army. They thought it was because I was the Police Commissioner, but it actually wasn't. The police and the Care Army were going from door to door to check on the elderly. So thank you to the frontline, to the Care Army, to our Police and to all the emergency services doing an amazing job through very, very difficult times, and it's wonderful to be able to get up here in front of you and share such wonderful stories. Thank you.

REPORTER:

So what happens [inaudible] volunteer from the Care Army [inaudible]?

COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

Yeah, so what happened was... and she registered with the Care Army, so they're calling everyone that registered and also all of the elderly around the state and this is exactly what happened. They hadn't heard from her when they tried to contact her for a few days and called the police, but what has been happening in communities, what you saw this on video, this has actually been happening all around the state – the elderly and vulnerable are getting phone calls and if we can't contact them or there's some concern, that the police are also going out and checking up. Without even getting the phone calls, just checking up on our elderly and our vulnerable in those communities. So thanks everyone.

PREMIER:

Now I might just bring in Minister Jones and Paul. Paul is part of the community recovery and the Care Army. And this is Paul here, and Paul's going to say a few words to you because he's our local hero. And Paul was the person who was concerned that he hadn't been

able to contact Erica and then contacted police. So I thought you might want to hear from Paul directly.

PAUL MAHONEY:

Thank you, Premier. Yes, so I had some concerns because when I spoke to Erica a few days beforehand she had really been on the ball and also had people talk to her, one of my colleagues I asked him to talk to her about [inaudible] alarms and possibly for her to think about getting one, and she wanted a few days to think over it. And when I had my two days off work from my normal leave, when I returned I didn't find any notes that had been made about it so I really was worried that okay, she was so on the ball why didn't she ring back. So yeah, and I rang her and couldn't contact her and so I also contacted her friend who had not been able to contact her either, so that's when I rang the police and talked to Officer Maxwell. And I'm really thankful that he took my concerns very seriously and that he instigated going out to visit her. I suppose I'd just like to say to everyone in the community that if you know of somebody who's elderly or lives alone by themselves, please just contact them on a regular basis. You don't have to be best friends with them but it's just the right thing to do at this moment, just to look out for one another and care for one another. And yeah, do the best you can by everyone else.

REPORTER:

What was it like when you watched that vision and see that?

PAUL MAHONEY:

Yeah, I got teary and emotional to see that because I hadn't seen it before, and I had not seen Erica at all. I had spoken to her on the phone several times. Yeah, so it was quite emotional to see.

REPORTER:

How many days had it been that you couldn't get in touch with her?

PAUL MAHONEY:

It's difficult to say, but she had actually spoken to one of my colleagues on Sunday, and I went to work on Monday. We hadn't heard back from her, which is not unusual because she said she'd take a couple of days. Then I had my rostered days off on Tuesday and Wednesday, so on Thursday when I came back, I didn't find any notes. So whether she fell on Sunday or Monday or Tuesday I'm not sure what day it actually was.

REPORTER:

And what sort of [inaudible] before this?

PAUL MAHONEY:

One of the concerns was that because of the COVID outbreak that she didn't want to put herself at risk. So there was some particular shopping items that she'd run out of in her house and because none of the supermarkets were at that stage delivering food into people's homes, we then contacted the Salvation Army and we were able to get their assistance. It was good

that they had people on the ground in the area that were able to do her shopping for her and deliver the shopping to her. Yeah, but because I'd spoken to her on the phone I'd also worked that she was actually falls risk because she told me that she had a fall in the past year where she had to go to hospital, so when I didn't see any returned call from her the day I returned for work it sort of rang alarm bells because she'd been so mentally alert that you know I was worried that this was out of the ordinary for her.

REPORTER:

Have you spoken to Erica since?

PAUL MAHONEY:

Yes, I've spoken to her a few times. She was still in hospital. I spoke to her last Friday and she was progressing well, but of course that sort of injury is going to take a while to recover from.

PREMIER:

Okay, thanks very much, Paul. Kate?

REPORTER:

Sorry, what's your surname?

PAUL MAHONEY:

It's Mahoney. Paul Mahoney.

MINISTER JONES:

I must agree with Paul, watching that footage with Paul absolutely brought a tear to my eye. And I think when you contrast those images with the images we've seen of the elderly in places like Italy and Spain and America it just shows you this is Queensland's story and that Queensland cares. And I think, Paul, as the Premier said, we are so proud of you. Standing with the Premier and launching the Care Army, the Premier absolutely said from day one that she wanted to have not only calling on all Queenslanders to step up to support family and friend, neighbours and loved ones during this time but also recognise that there would be people in our community that don't have that support and that was what the Care Army was all about. To really mobilise Queenslanders to lift like they always do during disasters and so Premier, I just want to say thank you for your leadership on this issue. We have so much to be proud of through COVID-19 and the Care Army is just another example where we see the very best in what is Queensland spirit and Paul, we thank you for having that intuition. Erica called the Care Army and the dates we have is that she called on the 17th of April. As you've heard there was a follow up call and then Paul called her again on the 21st. Erica said in her own words that she wanted a couple of days to think about getting a personal alarm. But that was a suggestion from Paul is that given she was alone, given she had identified that she was a falls risk that she should really think about having personal alarm. As Paul said, alarm bells rang for him when he returned to work and hadn't seen that she had contacted us back as she had indicated and it's wonderful to see that Erica is now recovering in hospital and that that help was guided. I also want to thank all of the community services that are working with us

– Volunteering Queensland, the Police, the Ambulance Services, QCOSS, the Red Cross – we've reached out to over 400 community organisations across Queensland to place volunteers with them to provide them with additional support. Meals on Wheels has seen significant growth both in volunteers as well as people needing assistance. So today really is an acknowledgement of how Queensland cares during these tough times. For me it's just another example of how the response that's happened from the health authorities, from the Premier, from everyone has indicated that we are not seeing the sad loss of life of our elderly like we have seen around the world.

PREMIER:

Thanks Kate, thank Paul. Now I just want to address the Moranbah mine issue. First of all, can I express deep sadness at what's happened here at this mine with five people injured and as Minister Miles said, that our burns unit is doing a great job at the moment taking the best possible care of these men. I understand that there is an investigation underway, that some inspectors flew in there yesterday afternoon. Today I've also asked Dr Lynham to actually fly up to Moranbah to meet with the Mayor and to talk to the community about what has happened there as well. And Dr Lynham is also talking to me about the possibility of setting up a board of inquiry into this tragedy. So, our thoughts are with the families and we do hope the very best for these men who have been tragically injured in this accident.

REPORTER:

This could have been a whole lot worse couldn't it?

PREMIER:

Oh absolutely. I'm taking very seriously the issue of having a board of inquiry. That would involve public hearings and I'll be getting some legal advice around that and Dr Lynham will be making a recommendation to me later on today.

REPORTER:

Why does this keep happening Premier? We've had so many investigations now into these mines deaths [inaudible] we've seen over the last 18 months. Why does this keep happening?

PREMIER:

Well it's very tough work and it's very complex and we need to get to the bottom of what happened here?

REPORTER:

Do you have any update on the prisoner found dead yesterday?

PREMIER:

No I don't, I'll find out for you.

REPORTER:

Premier, you met with the pubs and clubs today. When can we expect them to reopen?

PREMIER:

As we know National Cabinet is meeting. I can't speed up the National Cabinet process Josh, that's going to be on Friday morning, and I hope to have something out to Queenslanders shortly after.

REPORTER:

They must be putting forward a plan to you?

PREMIER:

As I said, there is a lot of work happening. We've got to have COVID-safe plans in place for cafes, restaurants, pubs, RSL's to reopen so we're getting all of that work done. There's been a lot of good work that's been happening. I met with Minister Fentiman, Minister Grace yesterday and all of that work is progressing at a rapid rate.

REPORTER:

Premier, why are tens of thousands of public servants going to get a pay rise in this 2019-2020 year when you said there'd be an immediate pay freeze?

PREMIER:

Well Jack, there is a pay freeze. Let me say it again, there is a 12 month pay freeze. My understanding is the Federal Government is doing a six month pay freeze, I am doing a 12 month pay freeze. There are people out there across Queensland who have lost their jobs. I know a lot of people are not happy about the pay freeze, but I am committed to the 12 month pay freeze.

REPORTER:

Can you just set out the timeline for that? So, when is the pay freeze from?

PREMIER:

From financial year to financial year. That's how a pay freeze operates.

REPORTER:

This coming financial year?

PREMIER:

Yes, correct.

REPORTER:

Right ok, do you...

PREMIER:

Any other questions because I've got to get going.

REPORTER:

Do you think you could have worded that a bit better given there's kind of the impression that the pay freeze would have happened immediately?

PREMIER:

No because Scott Morrison has said a six month pay freeze, I'm doing a 12 month pay freeze.

REPORTER:

This morning the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines said that when they visited the coal mine last month, they had safety concerns at that point. What does that mean for you? How does that make you feel given the mines still operating particularly after we've just had 12 months of safety reset in all coal mines?

PREMIER:

Well I know Dr Lynham has been meeting extensively with mines right across Queensland and the mines have a duty of care to ensure that their workers go to work safely and return home to their families safely and this has not happened in this case.

REPORTER:

Premier, the payroll tax on JobKeeper?

PREMIER:

Yes correct, sorry, thank you for reminding me. That was also here on the many things to talk about today. So, in relation to the payroll tax exemption will apply to businesses who employ Queenslanders and there will be a payroll tax exemption on the Federal Government's JobKeeper payment. So that's welcome news I believe for businesses across the state, around...more than \$300 million worth. Once again, we're listening to businesses out there and it's very important that we assist them as much as we can during this period.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press Conference, Brisbane

Topic: COVID-19 restrictions

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk
Health Minister Steven Miles
Chief Health Officer Jeannette Young

Date: 8 May 2020

Duration: 20 mins 56 secs

E&OE

PREMIER:

Well first of all, can I say to everyone and to all Queenslanders thank you for the mighty job you have been doing right across our state. And, of course, today zero cases overnight. And of course, a very productive National Cabinet meeting as well. And as we know, we are dealing with the health crisis and economic crisis, but I know that Queenslanders want certainty and they want a clear path forward in terms of what they can do and when their life can start returning back to some form of normality. And of course this is going to be gradual, it is going to take time and we cannot rush this. We cannot do everything all at once. But I want to reassure you that I am listening to my Chief Health Officer. I am taking the very best health advice and we are also working very constructively at the National Cabinet.

And of course too, we know how important our industries are to our state. Our tourism industry is over \$12 billion, the retail industry is over \$15 billion, and of course our hospitality, café, restaurant, accommodation is also a multibillion-dollar industry. And there are thousands of people out there that work in those industries and people and businesses want certainty. So there is a gradual return to some form of normality in our post-COVID world. It is going to look a bit different, but we are going to back each other and we are going to get through this, and we are going to get through this together. Today I am going to be announcing our clear Queensland plan for the next three months. Of course, there may be some setbacks along the way, but I hope that this plan gives some certainty to Queenslanders as we map our path forward.

And I want to thank every Queensland, whether you live up in the Torres Strait, down on the Gold Coast, or out in the outback, or along our coastal communities, everyone is stepping up and doing a great job. And of course that means the hygiene, the regular washing hands, the 1.5-metre distancing. And of course, as we transition to this post-COVID world, we also need to have COVID plans in place at workplaces. That is very, very important. And as I said, we are in this together. And at the heart of the plan is Queenslanders backing Queenslanders. That is what we are good at doing. We do it in times when we go through cyclones and bushfires, and I tell you what, we are going to step up and do it again – Queenslanders backing Queenslanders.

So, today I can announce that our Step One of the plan, we will be starting that Saturday week. So Step One will be starting Saturday week – in fact, 11:59pm on May 15. But take it from not this weekend, next weekend you will be allowed to do the following: Gatherings in homes with a maximum of five people. Gatherings of a maximum of 10 people together in a public space, dining in at restaurants, pubs, clubs, RSLs, and cafes with a maximum of 10 patrons at a time – a gradual reopening. This does not include bars or gaming venues. It is about the service of food, but you can get the service of food and alcohol there. You must have a COVID-safe plan in place. And I think we need to give certainty to the operators, but also to the customers and our workers. It is very important that our workers are also in a safe environment as well.

Also some good news for all the ladies out there, some of our beauty therapies will be opening and nail salons for a maximum of 10 people. And once again, unfortunately you cannot have walk-ins. You will need to take bookings and take people's names and details and have COVID-safe plans in place. Recreational travel of up to 150 kilometres from your home for day trips. Reopening of libraries, playground equipment, skate parks, outdoor gymnasiums – a maximum of 10 people at a time. Wedding guests will increase to 10, funerals increase to 20 guests indoors, 30 guests outdoors. This is really important - open homes and auctions. We need to make sure that our homebuyers out there can make those changes in house purchasing if they want to, or build a brand new home. So up to 10 people at a time. The reopening of public pools and lagoons. Queensland is known for our South Bank Parklands, the Cairns Esplanades, up at Airlie Beach as well. So, we need to make sure those big lagoons are operating and they need to have an approved plan for numbers greater than 10. Now, for an outdoor noncontact community sport for a maximum of 10 people.

Now, for outback Queensland, the Mayors have been onto me into the outback and I have to acknowledge that this is a different situation to the rest of Queensland because there are no quarantine cases in the outback. So I really want you to listen to Doctor Young, and she can explain in more detail about why that is different. But we will allow dining-in at pubs and cafe's, up to 20 people, reflecting the fact that they live a long way out from other communities, but also too they can have recreational activity in their region up to 500 kilometres. I mean, it is very big areas but they must remain in that outback area. As I said, these are sensible and gradual steps, so I urge everyone to stick to the rules.

Stage Two and Three are aimed at gradually increasing travel distances and the number of businesses in time for the June school holidays. We will review these plans, of course, at the end of each month, as well as our biosecurity plans, our restricted areas plans and, of course, our borders.

And the other important issue is that, having spoken to the tourism sector as well, we want to get some tourism going in time for the school holidays – I think this is really important. And you will be able to travel into your region up to 250 kilometres to go to local destinations for a drive holiday. And then in July, we are absolutely hoping, fingers crossed, if our numbers remain low and everything is going well, we will be able to open up travel for right across Queensland. And I know that means a lot to people. I know people are missing seeing their family and friends from other regions across Queensland, but we have had to put these measures in place and people will be able to holiday across Queensland.

We will be reviewing our borders, of course, and if the rates of transmission track lower in New South Wales and Victoria, we will look at enabling interstate travel. But let me put the proviso on, that is going to be based on health advice, and I will not Queenslanders or Queensland families at risk. And if there is a risk the border will remain closed. So I will hand over to Steven and Doctor Young, and then we are happy to take some questions.

MINISTER MILES:

Well as you have heard, overnight we had zero further cases of COVID-19, bringing our total to 1045. We currently have 45 active cases throughout the state – nine of them in hospital, three of those in intensive care. We are maintaining that high testing rate – 4132 tests. But it is important to note that there are still more than 3000 Queenslanders in active quarantine, subject to active quarantine orders – 3132 of them. Today I am a really proud Queenslander. Not only did we prove that we could beat down a wave of this terrible virus, we also proved we had one of the best hospital systems in the world and the best public health responses in the world. And we have proven – and we have proven that we can gradually ease restrictions without seeing a growth in the number of cases.

Of course, we had those mobility restrictions lifted gently last weekend. We are allowing families to visit their mothers on Mothers' Day on Sunday. Schools start to go back on Monday, and then next weekend we become one of the first states to move to the Step One easing of restrictions. Then, a month later we go to Step Two in time for school holidays. Broadly speaking, Step One allows gatherings of up to 10 people. Step Two allows gatherings of up to 20 people, as well as travel within your own region – as I say, in time to go away for the school holidays. These are appropriate and measured steps. I am confident that they will not see an exponential increase in cases. Throughout this though, our public health response will become even more important. Our testing will become even more important, our testing will become even more important, our contact tracing even more important, as well as the steps we can all take individually to stop the spread of the virus – hygiene, social distancing, and of course always staying at home if we are sick in any way.

DR YOUNG:

Queenslanders have done another great job. So, no new cases in the last 24 hours despite over 4000 people coming forward to be tested, which is excellent. And that is what we absolutely have to focus on going forward. We are going to remove a lot of the restrictions over the next three to six months, which is really good news. But while we are doing it, we need to be very, very cautious. And if anyone is unwell, it is important they stay home and they immediately get tested. If people keep doing that, which they have been doing, then we can continue to remove those restrictions because we know then that if we do have any cases, we can very rapidly respond and stop that ongoing transmission. That is important.

So today in Queensland we have over 3000 people in quarantine – some in hotels, government-provided hotels, others at home. And it is really important because they are the highest risk people, and we know that some of them are going to become cases. So it is important that they remain in hotels. And across the state it is important that people do follow the restrictions. People have to date. In the main, people have been brilliant and we have seen the results. It is important that people continue to be cautious, so to follow these restrictions

and this pathway as we go forward, because it is in place because we want to see what the impact is. And we believe if people actually do continue to follow these – so, remain at home if they are unwell, and when they are out and about maintain that 1.5 metre distance, and maintain that one person per four square metres when they go into an enclosed space. We know that we can manage this. And then the last one is just keep on washing your hands. Everyone has been doing that. We can see that in our results. That is really important to keep doing. And then we will be able to live successfully with this virus, despite it still being in our community.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, the Prime Minister said that outbreaks are inevitable while we lift restrictions. Do you see that happening here in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

Yes I do, which is why we must, if any of us get any symptoms at all, doesn't matter how minor they are, doesn't matter if you think 'it doesn't fit that definition', doesn't matter. Someone thinks 'I might have it', just that thought, go and get tested. That's really important. If we all commit to do that across the whole state, all 5.1 million of us, then when we do have an outbreak, we will limit it. That won't be a problem. We've had quite a few outbreaks in Queensland, right to the very start with Gold Coast with that group from Wuhan. We've had outbreaks in Queensland but they've been managed beautifully because we've got really good people in all of our hospital and health services and because people who have worked with them have come forward. I've never underestimated the restrictions that people have been placed under but people have willingly done them. One of the hardest I'm sure has been that requirement to stay at home if you're in quarantine for 14 days when you feel perfectly well and then the other is the requirement to stay at home until any symptoms have resolved after you're positive. That is so important and we have such a strong work ethic and I really believe that. People just keep on doing their job although they're unwell. That has to stop. At least while we're working through this particular virus.

REPORTER:

If we get outbreaks, will the restrictions come back on those that has been eased?

DR YOUNG:

They probably will for that community where that outbreaks occurred if we can't manage it by working through contact tracing. So if we have a large outbreak, like they've seen in Victoria or New South Wales or North West Tasmania. They had to put very firm restrictions on a very large community to get on top of the outbreak. So if we were to have a large outbreak and we couldn't control it then yes, we would have to do that but it would be related to that community and it would be so that we can use all the tools at our disposal to manage the outbreak. If people come forward really quickly, right at the start then we don't need to do it.

REPORTER:

Previously you wanted two weeks in easing different restrictions so you can have those two incubation periods and see what's happening. With Mother's Day restrictions easing then schools are now stage 1, is there enough time if there is an outbreak to pinpoint what's caused it?

DR YOUNG:

They are very minor releases in restrictions. They're small and they were never going to be a risk. Big one is this first step, first stage. That's a big release in restrictions and that involves the whole of society. So that's big one and we'll be waiting four weeks before we go to the next stage. They are the important ones. The fact that we did have some release in restrictions, we actually had them in Queensland very early. We were one of the first states to allow two visitors to someone's homes. We were the first state to allow 20 people at a funeral, so we've been slowly methodically reducing some of the restrictions as we go along. So no I'm not concerned, off course I'm not about those small releases in restrictions that will happen on Mother's Day because also I think Queenslanders take on board and actually follow the change in restrictions. On Sunday, we're saying one household, up to 5 people, can go and visit another household. That's not a big change. It's a very important one and I know people, I certainly think it's going to help at home and I'm sure a lot of people will but I don't see it as a big risk. I don't see any need to wait four weeks after doing that.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] changed for grandparents and grandchildren and people over 65 with those underlying health conditions?

DR YOUNG:

People who are vulnerable should think very carefully what they should do. They are people who understand themselves. If they're not quite sure than seek some advice from their GP or their treating doctor. That's important. But if grandchildren are well then, they should be able to visit their grandparents, maybe not hug. That would be good. But people should start gradually start going back to normal life but the most important one, if you're unwell, doesn't matter who you are, stay at home and get tested.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] will that be contingent of people downloading the app, the CovidSafe app or is that still voluntary.

DR YOUNG:

No, I strongly encourage everyone to download the app and I understand that over 5 million Australian have done that. We've not been able to get from the Commonwealth at this stage how many Queenslanders have done it but I would expect that a significant portion of that will be Queenslanders. I think it's really important that everyone download the app. I've certainly done it. My family members have done it but we don't know who actually has and definitely we are not using it in any mandatory manner.

REPORTER:

Premier, the COVID-safe plans for businesses that are re-opening, does that mean that need to physically submit a plan to someone like the health department who would sign off on it?

PREMIER:

Ok, let me give you a couple of examples there. So yesterday we had a great meeting with different cafes and restaurants. We put in place the National Cabinet's principles and Queensland has some principles and now their particular peak bodies are putting in place a code of practice. So they have to comply with that code of practice and I know that National Cabinet is looking at some workplace health and training as well. What the people were saying to me yesterday is that they weren't really expecting their cafes and restaurants to be opening until June/July. So this has been brought forward, it's up to them to make a decision but many have said to me that they can actually keep their take away business going and start to put in place these procedures to open up further. Off course in stage 2, there's also the ability for them to have more than 20 people, if they submit their COVID-safe plans for more. So I think this is a great first start and of course it's been very much welcomed because many owners were saying to me that they did not expect to be opening so soon. And they can choose, they may not choose to open next week but they may choose to open in two or three weeks' time but this gives them some certainty around our numbers and what's actually required.

REPORTER:

Talk about borders not opening until things are under control.

PREMIER:

Correct.

REPORTER:

What is the benchmark there before the borders are open to interstate travellers?

PREMIER:

Every state is different but it's going to depend on the level of community transmission that is happening in other states. For example, if there's large amounts of community transmission happening in Sydney, it would be irresponsible of us to have plane loads of tourists coming from Sydney, from a recognised hotspot through to the Gold Coast or Cairns. I would take the health advice on that from Dr Young.

REPORTER:

Premier, just on the NRL, what's your thoughts on the no jab, no play?

PREMIER:

Look, I agree with the Prime Minister, the health advice is that they should have a flu injection.

REPORTER:

So it's got your approval of the competition running in Queensland then?



PREMIER:

No, it's now a matter for them but I agree with the Prime Minister.

REPORTER:

Chief Health Officer on radio yesterday, maybe she can assist.....

PREMIER:

Yes, are there any other questions for me?

REPORTER:

In terms of the cafes and restaurants...

PREMIER:

Yes.

REPORTER:

10 people inside, is that regardless on the size of the business?

PREMIER:

Yes, you can only have 10 right. But what you can do is you could have 10 at an hours sitting and another 10 come through after that. So it's a maximum of 10 in the premise at any one time, except if you are in the outback and we have a map of the outback, what is defined by the outback and they are allowed to have 20.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, yesterday on the NRL you said that for players who didn't have the flu vaccination that would be breaching the agreement that you signed off on. Can you explain that? Have they written back to you on this?

DR YOUNG:

So I've had a discussion with them this morning, and they've stood down those three players at the moment until we work through what it means. So in actual fact, they've done a very, very good job. All their other players, staff and officials are all vaccinated. That is an amazing outcome, so I'm sure we'll be able to sort it all out. That's all being fixed. I was just caught a little bit unaware when I was doing that media yesterday afternoon, so I didn't know what they'd done. So that has all been sorted now and it's fine.

REPORTER:

So will they have to come back to you with a different plan if those players don't get that flu jab?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. They'll be coming back to me about those three individual players. But remembering, that's three players out of three teams. So we'll work that one through.

REPORTER:

If re-opening starts tomorrow week, how long – provided there are no outbreaks and things don't go back – how long before Queensland is back to normal?

PREMIER:

I can't answer that question because it's going to depend on a month-by-month basis. So we'll review at the end of each month to take us to the next step. One thing that I did forget to mention is that our tourism sector is so important to us, as are our amusement parks, our tourism experiences, and what we're saying to all of those sectors out there is to start getting in place your COVID-safe plans, and submitting your plans to your peak bodies because the school holidays are not too far away, and we want to see as many of those small experiences happening to keep our tourism sector going.

REPORTER:

All schools back May 25?

PREMIER:

Yes.

REPORTER:

Premier do have any on the latest on the mine accident? Is the government going to set up this inquiry...?

PREMIER:

Cabinet will be considering that on Monday about whether or not to put in place a Board of Inquiry, and we'll be able to make an announcement after the cabinet on Monday.

REPORTER:

And Premier, what are your plans for the weekend when restrictions ease?

PREMIER:

My plans?

REPORTER:

Are you going to hit any pubs, restaurants, cafes?

PREMIER:

I don't have time for that! I wish I did! But I'm hoping to take some cake over to my mother – socially distancing of course – because I think she deserves it. Thanks. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Format: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles
Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 12 May 2020

Duration: **minutes**

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Good morning. Well first of all, today is International Nurses Day and I am sure all Queenslanders every day, but especially this year are thankful to our nurses for what they do every single day – staffing our hospitals, taking care of us and our loved ones, getting up every day and dedicating their day and their lives to taking care of us. And so today is a day for us to thank them, and I would urge all Queenslanders to maybe put something on your Facebook page about how much you appreciate Queensland's nurses and what they have done to get us through this COVID-19 pandemic. Today in Queensland we're reporting six additional COVID-19 cases to Queensland's total. However, they are all cases that were tested and diagnosed in other states, and those states have since advised us that they were Queensland residents. Four were tested and diagnosed in Victoria and they were passengers of the Coral Princess cruise ship. The other two were diagnosed in Western Australia. They are all now recovered, so our number of active cases remains 19. However, we will add that six to our total, taking Queensland's total number of COVID-19 cases – that is the total number of Queenslanders diagnosed with COVID-19 – to 1051. In the last 24 hours we did 1856 tests. We now have just seven people in our Queensland hospitals, three of those are receiving intensive care in our intensive care units, again, staffed by those fantastic nurses as well as doctors and other support staff. I'll hand over to the Chief Health Officer.

DR YOUNG:

Good morning. So, as you've heard, we've got six additional cases in Queensland today. They are not new cases. So, they were diagnosed, managed, treated in other states – in Victoria and Western Australia. Four were related to a cruise ship and two we are still tracking down how they contracted the infection. So that means we've got another day in Queensland without any new cases, which is excellent. It is really, really important, though, that everyone if you're unwell please isolate yourself, stay at home, and get tested. And if we do that consistently right through we'll be able to manage the impact of COVID-19 on our lives and our systems and our society, and we'll be able to gradually open up more and more and return more and more towards normal, which will be an excellent thing for everyone. So we've seen children starting to go back to school, and that will continue, again, if we maintain the focus that everyone if you're unwell stay home. Then if you're out and about try, wherever possible – it's

not always possible – to maintain a 1.5 metre distance from other people. And if you're going into enclosed spaces or, indeed, if you're outside, if you can maintain one person per four square metres, because we know in most cases that will protect you from contracting the infection if it's circulating near you. Those things are very important. Plus wash your hands, because the virus does survive on surfaces, so when you touch surfaces you can potentially pick it up. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Doctor, before you go, have you made a decision on the NRL anti-vaxxers as to whether they should play or not?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. I sent a letter to the NRL yesterday in which I did exempt them for medical contraindications, no different to the exemptions that I provide for children who are attending childcare or for people going into aged care. So those have those same exemptions.

REPORTER:

Does that mean they're free to play?

DR YOUNG:

If they've got medical reasons for not being vaccinated. So they are very clear. If you have had an anaphylactic reaction to a previous flu vaccine or to any component of a flu vaccine then you do not need to be vaccinated. So I've provided that exemption.

REPORTER:

But what if it's a philosophical issue?

DR YOUNG:

No. That's not covered. No. So only if you have a medical contraindication, and that is no different – although the NRL didn't put that in their initial submission to me, I thought that was reasonable, that the NRL players and support staff and coaches and officials have that same exemption that I provide for visitors going to aged care facilities or, indeed, for children, because if children aren't vaccinated, you would be aware there are certain things they can't do as well.

REPORTER:

So some of those players do qualify for that?

DR YOUNG:

I don't know. They haven't come back to me.

REPORTER:

With now only 18 active cases, how close are we to seeing the end of coronavirus in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

You would have to have two incubation periods. So 28 days of no new cases after all of those active cases are no longer, once they have recovered. Plus, you would have to ensure that your borders were absolutely rigid.

REPORTER:

Last night on Q+A the Premier said that we could see trouble between South Australia and the Northern Territory. Could we see something like that?

DR YOUNG:

That's reviewed as the Premier would have said at the end of each month, and it depends on the cases in those states.

REPORTER:

Does some of those border measures or travel restrictions also apply to remote communities, say Indigenous communities, Palm Island, the Torres Strait?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, so under the Biosecurity Act, that's a Commonwealth piece of legislation, all of our remote discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at the moment have restrictions on travel in and out of those communities.

REPORTER:

There's four cases that are linked to the cruise ship. Were they directly passengers who came off a cruise ship?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, the Coral Princess.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Toowoomba bureau about Goondiwindi, apparently it's not classified as being in the outback under those easing restrictions, do you know why that is?

DR YOUNG:

So the outback has been determined based on those four hospital and health service districts and those LGAs that have not had any cases at all.

REPORTER:

The six people who are counted in our tally now, when you say they've recovered, does that mean that before they were allowed to travel they tested negative for coronavirus?

DR YOUNG:

No, that means that those states made a decision that they had recovered and it was safe for them to travel back to Queensland.



REPORTER:

And they wouldn't have been infectious to other people when they were travelling?

DR YOUNG:

No, they shouldn't have been. But they're all the details. We will now double check for ourselves. So we've only just been notified so we now need to go through and just work that through. But the date of onset of these cases was actually quite a while ago so they would have recovered.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] remote regions across Queensland, especially up in the Cape, are any of those open again or when can we expect those to reopen?

DR YOUNG:

No, all of those remote... or some of them not quite so remote discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at this point in time remain closed to travel in or out of those communities, except of course for the exemptions that have been put in place.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, is there an indication the Minister has a case to answer for in this whole Jackie Trad investigation? We've seen the senior executive in the Department go, the former Deputy Premier has quit. Does the Education Minister not have a role here?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well that's all being investigated by the CCC but I've seen nothing to suggest that the Minister herself had any role to play. It appears to me that Education is following the due process, working with the CCC.

REPORTER:

Do you know why it took them two days to stand someone aside?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'm not privy to that information, Domanii, but I'm sure as you'd expect Education is handling it entirely appropriately and according to the guidance provided to them by the CCC.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, I'm not aware of any further detail of that and as I say these matters are appropriately being investigated and I'm hesitant to comment any further.

REPORTER:

The Government has until August to table its response to the committee report on those [inaudible], are you confident that the Government will pass them before the election?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, they're matters for the Premier and the Leader of the House. We'll consider them in due course. Of course if there are timeframes requiring a response we generally do respond within those timeframes and I'm sure the responsible Ministers are working on that.

REPORTER:

Have you spoken to the former deputy premier, how's she going?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I have. She is understandably upset at the course of events, however as I've said to you she's done the right thing to avoid further distraction to the Government and the party.

REPORTER:

One of the ALP party elders has said that her resignation might make it easier for you guys to secure regional seats, would you agree with that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm not going to get into that. I am confident though that the team that we now have in place will work together very well and will ensure that right across the state we have a focus on what is the challenge for every government in the world right now – the health response to COVID-19 and the economic response to COVID-19. I like to say that the health response was the first stage of the economic response. You'll see in places where they failed in the health response, the economic cost has been, and I believe will be, far, far greater. But clearly, the leadership team, the entire Cabinet, the entire Government now need to shift our focus to creating jobs and restarting those jobs right across the state.

REPORTER:

How does your style differ as Deputy Premier to Jackie Trad's?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well I think initially clearly I'm going to continue to be focused on the health response. My role is different there. I'm the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health, and I think it's appropriate given the circumstances that health take more of a front forward step in terms of the Government and that's what you've been seeing this year I think. That won't change too much. But I am looking forward to playing more of a leadership role within the Government, working more closely with the Premier and Cameron and Kate to do that wider task of the Government which is, as I say, to ensure that we continue the focus on health but that right across the state we have a program that will deliver jobs.

REPORTER:

Do you know if the Assistant Treasurer job is going to be filled?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

As I understand it the roles that were outlined yesterday are the extent of the current changes, however of course it's the Premier's prerogative to make those kinds of allocations.

REPORTER:

Last night was your first official night as the Deputy Premier, what did you do to celebrate?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I had a very brief glass of champagne with my staff and then I headed home for dinner with my family. My eldest son cooked us cheeseburgers. I had a double cheeseburger which I'm not sure is Chief Health Officer approved but it was what was prepared for me.

REPORTER:

Do you believe the changes, and what happened on the weekend stems the believing that you can win this election?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think clearly, from here, not just until the end of the election but I believe until the end of the health emergency, this provides us with a very strong and stable leadership platform. The four of us will work well together, we will lead the government well, that is very clearly what the Premier was seeking to do by moving so swiftly on Sunday, and I certainly think that decisions that she has made are good ones. I am very grateful for the support that she has demonstrated for me, and I am looking forward to playing that role.

REPORTER:

Do you thin the government is in a better position today than it was on Saturday?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think the government has been in a strong position all year, frankly, I think Queenslanders will rightly see how strongly we have managed a global crisis here in Queensland. We have done better than just about anywhere else in the world, and I think that reflects not just on me and the Premier and Jeanette, but on the entire government.

REPORTER:

Do you ever see Jackie Trad making a comeback to a senior position?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I understand it is Jackie's intention to contest the next election in South Brisbane. If she wins it, I am sure Jackie will have a long and substantial contribution to make.

REPORTER:

In the ministry?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

They're not decisions for me...

REPORTER:

But if she's cleared by the CCC, is there any reason why she couldn't come back into the Cabinet?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The Premier has said that won't happen before the election, but what happens after the election will depend on what the Queensland people do. I fully expect her to run a really tough contest in South Brisbane and hopefully she wins.

REPORTER:

Will you be campaigning alongside her in South Brisbane?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I will be campaigning alongside every single endorsed Labor because that is our best way of securing a government that will prioritise health and jobs for the next four years.

REPORTER:

And regional Queensland [inaudible] how confident are you with all these restrictions you'll be able to get out there and campaign in regional Queensland?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We'll have to see how those restrictions change throughout the year, but we have great MPs on the ground, able to be the spokespeople of the government in all of our major provincial cities. They do a great job. Jeanette and I have continued to travel to hospital and health services throughout, because our role there is important, that leadership role there is important, and I expect that you will see MPs travelling to Brisbane for Parliament in coming sittings, so there remains an opportunity for us to, importantly I think, travel throughout the state and talk to Queenslanders. But as I say we also have a really strong team of regional MPs bolstered again by a new regional minister just yesterday.

REPORTER:

Is it looking more like the state election will be a full postal vote?


DEPUTY PREMIER:

We have meetings about that ongoing at the moment and I expect the Attorney-General will have more to say. Clearly that is one of the options, but it is not the only option and we will consider the advice from the Chief Health Officer as well as from the Electoral Commission.

REPORTER:

Do you expect Jackie Trad to come to Parliament next week, or will she be Zooming in from the other side of the river?

DEPUTY PREMIER:



I am not sure what those arrangements are.

REPORTER:

Just a question from the Gold Coast; tourism bosses there suggesting commercialising beaches like Bali, with bars, what do you think of that idea?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think one of the best things about Queensland is our beaches and the fact that they are an opportunity to be in a natural environment, so I would be hesitant to embrace those kinds of approaches. I think there's plenty of commercial opportunities near our wonderful beaches, so that would be my view anyway.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DRG

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, XXXX spokesperson Patrick Donogue and Agriculture Minister Mark Furner

Date: 13 May 2020

Duration: 17 minutes approx.

E&OE

PREMIER:

Good morning everyone. Today in relation to our COVID cases, we've only had one case, but it is an old case, so that is good news. So we are at 1052 and we still have 18 active cases across Queensland and, once again, a big thank you to everyone who's been doing an amazing job across Queensland and this is excellent news.

Well, today, I couldn't think of a better place to be than here at the XXXX Brewery. I'm joined by Patrick and, of course, we know that this weekend our restrictions are easing and in the outback, they will be able to have 20 patrons, of course local in the local pubs and cafes and restaurants being able to enjoy a meal, a beer, or a glass of wine. I really want to thank XXXX because they're looking forward to doing a great run out to our pubs out West and they'll be delivering the liquid gold... the XXXX Gold. So XXXX Gold will be travelling out west over the thousand kilometres, going to places like Blackall, Barcaldine, Ilfracombe, Longreach and the list is endless and the pubs are ready. So this is great news. And of course, I've responded to the outback Mayor's that raised the issues with me on our regular phone hook ups, they said "Premier, we want you to really listen to us" and we have. The reason we have been able to do this is because these areas have been quarantine-free for many weeks. So great news. I'm quite sure they will be a lot of happy patrons, a lot of happy families. And let the XXXX gold start flowing. So I'll hand over to Patrick to say a few words and then we're very pleased to take a few questions, and then Minister Furner and I will address a few other issues. Patrick?

PATRICK DONOHUE:

Thanks Premier. With the announcement, it is quite exciting to see the pubs and clubs across Outback Queensland are opening up and when you think about clubs and pubs in regional Queensland they really are the cultural life blood of a community. The level of excitement from the operators is exceptional and speaking to locals within these communities they are absolutely delighted that the pubs and clubs are opening up. We are sending 3000 litres of XXXX Gold which will get up there as far as Longreach by Saturday and we're hoping that everyone's going tap their kegs and get those locals together and, I guess, bring sociability back to the outback. Obviously, these venues have done it quite tough with drought, so we thought this was a great initiative, providing free kegs, 3000 litres, to all the outback pubs and clubs to help support them and bring the communities together. Thank you.



PREMIER:

Any questions for Patrick at all?

REPORTER:

Is it free?

PATRICK DONOHUE:

Perfect. They are free, yeah.

REPORTER:

Will you be doing more runs in the future?

PATRICK DONOHUE:

At this stage, obviously well we are looking the staged changes. At this stage we look at Outback Queensland.... Outback Queensland has done it quite tough. So, at this stage we want to support Outback Queensland. They've got 20 packs that can get into their venue. So initially this will be our first run.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PATRICK DONOHUE:

Well I think that's going to be determined. Obviously with 20 packs within a venue. Certainly, RSA plays its place. Depending on how the venue chooses to operate. They may do multiple sittings over the course of a day. They may consider just having 20 in their venue for the day. So it's really quite hard to determine how long it will last. Hopefully not long.

PREMIER:

Okay, thank you. We'll deal with some other issues. Alright, so that's great news for our outback pubs and it's absolutely going to be very well received on Saturday. Now I want to talk about a very serious issue and that is the impact that we are seeing on our beef industry here in Queensland. to set the scene can I say, that Queensland in terms of our trade especially in relation to our economy has been holding up incredibly well during this COVID crisis. In fact, our most recent report...so up until March, our trade was still holding up at around \$82 billion. We'd only fallen a couple of billion dollars since COVID. Of course, we expect to see further impacts over the coming months but our trade is really important for our Queensland economy. Let me also make it clear that our beef trade is incredibly important. Around \$4.89 billion worth of beef exports to countries around the world. China is an incredibly important trading partner to Queensland. let me say that again – China is an incredibly important trading partner to Queensland. Most our trade goes to China. What trade means is trade means jobs. It means jobs for Queenslanders. And in relation to our beef industry, it's thousands of jobs. Over 18,000 jobs. What I'm really concerned about is this potential for a trade war to erupt and to damage Queensland's exports, to damage Queensland's reputation and to damage Queensland's jobs and livelihoods. Let's remember – these are some of the toughest jobs that our workers have to do in our beef industry and if we

go into a full-blown trade war this could mean over 3200 workers impacted. This is really serious. These are workers in Demmore across Ipswich, our outer urban regions. It would impact on Toowoomba as well, as well as Kilcoy. I'll get our Agricultural Minister to say a few words in a moment, but I really would like this issue resolved as quickly as possible. I'll be writing to the Trade Minister today, and to the Prime Minister. Minister Furner has already written to his counterpart. Our beef industry is incredibly important and I say to everyone involved in that industry – we will stand by your side to ensure that we don't see any negative impacts of our beef in Queensland. I'll hand over to Minister Furner and then we're happy to take some questions.

MINISTER FURNER:

Thank you Premier. And obviously over many years the Premier in her position as Trade Minister, myself as Agricultural Minister have built a healthy and respectful relationship with China and its counterparts. It was only round about this time last year I was in Hong Kong and Chongqing with a trade delegation delivering the beautiful beef that Queensland has and is able to provide. So up in that territory of Chongqing there is an insatiable appetite for our beef so that's why this issue is so important to Queensland. Our agriculture export market but also trade and that's why the Premier indicated I wrote to my counterpart in the Commonwealth, Minister Littleproud, yesterday expressing some information about where this matter is heading. We don't need another beef with China over this issue. So I call on the Federal Government to resolve this as soon as possible because it is such an important trade matter for Queensland and for our Queensland farmer's as well. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Who do you see [inaudible] towards China [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

I think this could potentially be tens of thousands of jobs right across Australia. It is really important so I would urge, these are international diplomatic matters but I would really urge the Federal Government to sort this out as quickly as possible and give certainty to the tens of thousands of jobs or the thousands of jobs here in Queensland.

REPORTER:

Who do you see as responsible [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Look, that's a matter for the Federal Government to address but I think we need some certainty and we need some clarity.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

Well, these are international issues and I would urge the Federal Government to please to sort these issues out as quickly as possible. There are beef producers who really need certainty

here and our workers. Let's not forget the thousands of workers that have to put food on the table. This is their livelihoods, so we really need this sorted out quickly.

REPORTER:

Why do you think Queensland is being punished?

PREMIER:

We have a large number of abattoirs. My recollection is that the one in, the JBS in Dinmore is one of the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. This is really important. I have actually been over to China in the past and over to Japan, promoting Queensland beef and our beef is regarded as the best in the world. This is really important, these trade ties are crucial, especially as we go to the recovery process of COVID.

REPORTER:

There's an editorial in the Chinese newspaper this morning with claims there will be further economic repercussions if Australia joins in with the blame game in the US, how concerning is that?

PREMIER:

Look that is concerning and I urge the Federal Government to please sort these issues out quickly.

REPORTER:

The abattoir in Kilcoy [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

I just think that this issue needs to be sorted out at an international level very quickly. Our Federal Government needs to do that and I'm quite sure that they have the willingness to do that.

REPORTER:

Premier, have you spoke with Grace Grace to seek assurances that she hasn't had a role [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Lane, look, very clearly here, the Minister has put out a statement yesterday and I stand by that statement that the Minister has put out. Now these are matter before the CCC, there's an investigation by the CC and I would want the CCC to get on and do that job.

REPORTER:

Is it unusual that the Deputy Premier was texting the deputy DG?

PREMIER:

I don't know the circumstances there, Josh, so they are matters for her, but these matters are all before the CCC.



REPORTER:

Is it unusual for a deputy premier to be texting a deputy DG?

PREMIER:

Well, they are all matters for her and they are all before the CCC at the moment, so I really don't want to prejudice that investigation.

REPORTER:

The CCC does get [inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yep...

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

No, these are permanent appointments, Lane. These are permanent appointments. I've made these appointments. I made my decision and that's the decision.

REPORTER:

Would there be a path for her to the Cabinet after the election?

PREMIER:

I'm not even discussing the... we haven't even had the election yet so we'll just do one step at a time. We're focused on recovery from COVID, the economic recovery and you know what, everyone going to have to win their seat.

REPORTER:

Do you think Jackie Trad will win pre-selection again in South Brisbane?

PREMIER:

That's a matter for her and the Party. She's indicated she's putting her nomination forward.

REPORTER:

Does the situation bring into jeopardy the current position of that principal that was selected?

PREMIER:

They are all matters before the CCC. I can't be any clearer.

REPORTER:

When can we expect Grace Grace to come out and have a chat to us?

PREMIER:

Well, we are going to before Parliament next week so any questions can be asked next week. She's put out a statement yesterday and I stand by that statement she's put out.

REPORTER:

Why does Frankie Carroll move to [inaudible] salary [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Look, they are matters for the Director-General but very clearly Rachel Hunter has become the Under Treasurer with Minister Cameron Dick. She's one of the most experienced, she's the second most experienced senior public servant we have in Queensland. She's been a State Development Director-General, she's worked in Education, she's worked across a number of portfolios. I'm delighted at her appointment and I really want Frankie Carroll to do a great job looking after my new Minister that has enormous responsibility for regional development and also and for manufacturing. Minister Glenn Butcher will be working very, very closely with the Treasurer.

REPORTER:

Have you spoken to Jackie Trad and what have you said?

PREMIER:

I have only spoken to her on the weekend.

REPORTER:

Just a question for the Minister if that's...

PREMIER:

Yes, sure and then I have one other issue to raise.

REPORTER:

Just a question from Cairns. What can the State Government do to support canefarmers after the backflip with the MSF negotiations?

MINISTER FURNER:

This is in relation to molasses I take it. So no doubt that it's a Federal Government matter and I know they've been in discussions with MSF and also cane growers up there so it's probably a question that's directed at the relevant minister from the Commonwealth in respect to that matter.

PREMIER:

Okay, one final thing. So my office is being inundated with issues about what beauty services are going to be available this weekend. So this is very important for not only the people in the beauty industry but also for a lot women and men across Queensland. So from this Saturday, nail and beauty salons can open for a maximum of 10 clients and of course the hairdressing salons have been opened prior to that. So beauty therapy services include waxing, laser treatments, manicure, pedicures, nail painting, eyelash extensions, facials, cosmetic injections

and the Chief Health Officer will be putting out a full list, but can I just say to everyone there is a lot of interest in this issue. My office has been inundated and I hope today I have provided some clarity. And then the following month there will be added spray tanning, saunas and other water-based spa services.

REPORTER:

Would those services have to provide any details to [inaudible] before they're allowed to operate?

PREMIER:

They have to have a COVID-safe plan in place, they must operate by appointment only and they must keep a register of clients to assist in contact tracing.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] ask customers to download the COVIDSafe app?

PREMIER:

That's a matter for businesses. But once again can I please stress to everyone, if you can download that app please download that app. I have, my family has. It's going to make contact tracing now and into the future a whole lot easier. So, alright, thank you.

REPORTER:

Some cafes and restaurants like the Broncos Leagues Club and Eatons Hill are concerned about this 10 person limit because they're so big, what's...

PREMIER:

Yeah, look. That's a great question. And look, honestly, we tried everything we could to see how we could expand that number but the advice of the health experts was we had to start off with 10 in areas that have had COVID cases or in quarantine. So what the 10 allows people to do is to get their procedures and practices in place, they can choose to either open or not open, and of course next month we move to the 20 patrons, or they can submit plans in for more if they have larger areas. So we're trying to do everything we can here, and look, honestly, we didn't think this was going to happen until September. It's happening in May. This is ahead of schedule and this is due to the terrific work that Queenslanders have done during COVID. So thanks everyone. And now we got to get these kegs off and running, hey. Thanks

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier and Health Minister Steven Miles, Minister Coralee O'Rourke, Aaron Harper MP and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 15 May 2020

Duration: 37 minutes approx.

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Fantastic to be here in Townsville today. I had barely been sworn in when our local MPs here Aaron, Scott and Coralee got onto me and said they'd really appreciate if Jeannette and I could visit Townsville again. And so it is great to be here within my first week. We met yesterday with Townsville Enterprises Ltd, the Townsville Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor Jenny Hill and we had a very useful conversation about our staged recovery plan to reopen the economy and businesses here in Townsville and of course right across the state. We have a really great announcement here about services at the Townsville University Hospital that I would like to speak about first before giving you a COVID-19 update.

We are investing an additional \$4.8 million dollars to expand the dialysis services here at Townsville University hospital, taking us from 17 to 30 dialysis chairs. It will allow us to continue to meet the growth in demand for those services. Townsville, and the wider Townsville region, with a larger Indigenous population than many parts of the state has increased demands for dialysis and this will allow us to meet that demand. The unit currently serves 45 to 50 people a day and this will allow them to support even more patients. It's a sign that even during the pandemic, this government has continued to invest in more and better health services right across the state. We are not just focused on the pandemic response, although of course that is important, we need to continue to expand our health services and that is precisely what we have been doing. I will ask our local MPs to speak to this announcement, take any questions on that and then Jeannette and I will give that COVID update.

MINISTER O'ROURKE:

This is a fantastic announcement today and this is about making sure that we are really investing in high-quality healthcare here in the north. The expansion here, we know, will support those patients who require dialysis and we know that there is a disproportionately high number of Indigenous patients who require dialysis. So to be able to provide additional services in the north really goes towards closing the gap with the healthcare situation and really addressing and providing the support that is needed. So I welcome this. This also enables the start within the renal unit to provide emergency haemodialysis. This expansion also provides the medical staff in the renal unit to provide an emergency chair for haemodialysis. This is a fantastic announcement for the hospital, enabling high-quality

healthcare to be delivered to those who need it most and I welcome the announcement by the Health Minister today.

AARON HARPER:

It's fantastic to have the Deputy Premier and Health Minister and the Chief Health Officer back in Townsville. As we enter this weekend, with more easing of restrictions, with Stage I of our roadmap, I think it is important that we reinforce that people continue to do those very practical measures of social distancing, hand hygiene and, look, whilst we welcome the extended travel, 150 kilometres of travel, parks are open, people are able to go – limited numbers – to restaurant and cafes. But this morning, there was a new reported case in Rockhampton and of course, contact tracing will now commence because of that. I think that should send a very clear message that we are far from out of the woods on this. We need to be very cautious in our approach. If you go to a shopping centre and it is crowded, leave and come back another time. We need to absolutely not be complacent. We need to be very, very careful, cautious, in the way that we enter these stages so that we don't see outbreaks or clusters or a second wave. Townsville has done particularly well. We have still got some 42 people in quarantine but that doesn't mean that there is no risk out there. So I will just reinforce to the community, please continue those very good social distancing practices.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Is there any questions on the dialysis announcement? Otherwise I am happy to move onto the COVID-19 update. Right now in Queensland we have 17 active cases of COVID-19. In the last 24-hour period, we tested 3425 people. In our hospitals, in the south-east, we have six COVID-19 patients, three of those are in intensive care. The Premier has already confirmed this morning that we have added two new cases to our total for today. One of those is a dated case from Western Australia which has been added to Queensland's total because they are a Queensland resident. The other though is cause for some concern. We have a further confirmed case in Rockhampton. The person involved is a nurse at a state-run aged care facility, the North Rockhampton Aged Care Facility. The result from that test was confirmed at 8pm last night.

And the health service along with the Department of Health, Queensland Health, have responded very rapidly overnight. They have sent a rapid response team from Brisbane, they are working to quarantine any staff and residents who may be contacts of that individual. They are rapidly testing a large number of people to identify whether anyone else has been affected. The centre is currently locked down and the staff have been, any staff in contact, are in quarantine and have been tested. The last confirmed case in Rockhampton was on the 30th of March. So something like seven weeks since they had their last case, their last active case was considered recovered on the 1st of May. And this just serves to underline that even after cities have long periods of time without active cases, things can turn very, very quickly. Somebody cannot return from another part of the state, be tested and found to have been infected and then we need to be able to respond as a health service incredibly rapidly to ensure that that does not lead to an outbreak. That is the work that is currently under way in Rockhampton right now and I'd like to invite the Chief Health Officer to outline further.

DR YOUNG:

There are two reasons I'm here in Townsville today. First, the very exciting news about the expansion of the dialysis unit, so important for a community. We know in Australia, here in Queensland that we are very good at treating chronic kidney disease. But we need those dialysis facilities to be able to do that and to offer it to everyone. That is excellent we've seen that increase in the number of chairs here in such an important city for North Queensland. The second is to commend Townsville in the way they responded to the cases to date, so Townsville to date has had 24 cases, 23 of those 24 cases were managed so that there was no ongoing transmission. That has got to be a world first, world-class response. Now, I'm here to say we must continue doing that. So, we're hearing today we've seen a case, out of nowhere, happen and Rockhampton. Rockhampton to date as managed their cases beautifully. Now they have another case and they need to manage that case which is what they're doing. And so that is a very important lesson for all of us across the state. We have not beaten this virus yet. But, we have fantastic systems and responses in place so we can.

Here today, I'm working with the communities involved to make sure that this new case we have detected overnight in Rockhampton is managed so that we don't get ongoing transmission. The first thing that's happening is that aged care facility is immediately working to assess every single one of their residents - there are 115 in the facility - every single one of their staff - there are 180 healthcare workers who work in that facility - to make sure that today, none of them have the infection. Then we will work with them as to which of those staff members and residents need to immediately go into quarantine for 14 days, because we know the incubation period of course. The healthcare worker who was diagnosed last night had been working in that facility while unwell, which is very unfortunate, and we are clarifying what exactly happened there. But we will now work with that facility and Central Queensland is a very good hospital and health service and they know what they're doing and they're sorting through. I have sent a very senior experienced public health physician from Brisbane to assist them in working through all of those issues to make sure that we manage this. Also, we know that healthcare worker is also living in the community, and they will have been out and about in the community.

So, I'm asking every single person who lives in Rockhampton, who has any symptoms at all to immediately go forward, go and see their own GP or go to one of the fever clinics and get tested. That is really important. We need to see whether there are any other cases that have occurred in Rockhampton as a result of this particular individual. Rockhampton has not had an active case for a number of weeks, so this is brand-new. We will just have to work that through. It's a very important lesson for all of us across the state of Queensland. We don't know where the next case will happen. We can send in response teams, we have them all organised and we can do that at any time, but we can only do that if we know about the cases. Everyone in Queensland, please come forward if you've got any symptoms at all of acute respiratory infection, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, or a fever or a history of a fever. Please come forward and get tested. That's really important. You will then need to be in isolation until you get that result but in most parts of Queensland, due to the enormous amount of testing capacity we now have in place, that shouldn't be too long. It is so important. If we pick up cases immediately that are potentially infectious, then we can minimise the impact on the rest of the community. I can't overstate that. That is the most important thing all of us can do for the community, if we are unwell, just isolate yourself and get tested. Wait for that result before going back into the community.

Number two, wherever possible, maintain social distancing. 1.5 metres between yourself and other people and in enclosed spaces, one person per four square metres. Really do that. If you do have to cough, always cough into your elbow and not into your hands because then you will touch surfaces with your hands. You could spread the virus when you've coughed onto a surface and someone else pick it up. Wash your hands regularly. That will protect you. You don't know where the virus might be. We are releasing a lot of those very onerous restrictions this weekend, but we need to keep alert. It is really important because if this doesn't work, if we can't safely release these restrictions, it will make it very difficult to go on and put more of those restrictions, release more those restrictions as we go forward. This weekend, everyone in Queensland, if you go somewhere and it's crowded, please just go somewhere else. Really use your common sense which Queenslanders are known for. We've managed this virus beautifully till now. We believe we'll continue to manage it beautifully but it means every single one of us has to play their part. Thank you

REPORTER:

Is the facility in question, is it the North Rockhampton nursing home?

DR YOUNG:

That's right, the North Rockhampton nursing home. It's actually located in the northern part of Rockhampton is the facility of concern

REPORTER:

And do you know where the nurse may have picked up the virus?

DR YOUNG:

We are still confirming that but we believe she probably picked it up in Brisbane. She had a trip down to Brisbane during a period she would have picked up the infection from where we know she started to have symptoms. That is not confirmed yet but that is where we believe she picked it up.

REPORTER:

Do you have any idea of the timeframe that she had been working for? Like was she working up until yesterday?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, she was working up until yesterday.

REPORTER:

How concerning is that?

DR YOUNG:

It's very, very concerning and all I can say is, to everyone out there, if you are sick with any symptoms, it doesn't matter how mild they are for this particular infection, even with mild symptoms, you can transmit this infection to other people so if you have any symptoms, please just be ultra-cautious, isolate yourself at home and get tested.

REPORTER:

Will you be following up with state government and public workers regarding the message of not continuing to work whilst infectious?

DR YOUNG:

Off course I will be. Yes.

REPORTER:

Would you ask for disciplinary action or something like that?

DR YOUNG:

That is up to the hospital and health service, they'll work through all of that. We don't know all the facts here this stage so it's important before we jump to any conclusions that we go and work through the actual facts and work out what happened.

REPORTER:

Do you know how long [inaudible] potentially exposing people at the nursing home?

DR YOUNG:

We believe that she was infectious from the 3rd of May.

REPORTER:

If she was infectious from the 3rd of May, how [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Sorry I didn't hear.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] how was it able to happen if this was [inaudible] 3rd of May

DR YOUNG:

Right so, she was contagious from the 3rd of May. She actually had symptoms from 5 May so we also go back 48 hours before the onset on symptoms. We believe, remembering this is all only happened last night so we have to go and confirm all these but to our understanding at this point in time, we believe that she was infectious from 3 May onwards. In terms of why it took so long for her to get tested, we are working through all of that now. That's why we are taking an extremely cautious approach with all of the residents and the staff in that facility.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. That's all of what we are working out at the moment but we are taking a very, very cautious approach here and the hospital and health services are doing an excellent job. At this

point in time we are regarding all 115 residents and all 180 staff as potentially having being in contact. When we get through the details, I'm sure we'll find that the numbers are much smaller than that but I think the most cautious approach is just take the most broad approach. Now in terms of the community, again we will be doing contact tracing but my message to the community is, it doesn't matter whether of not you may or may not have come into contact with this particular individual, today, I want anyone in Rockhampton who has symptoms at all suggestive of Covid-19 to go and get tested. That's really important.

REPORTER:

If she was visibly ill or unwell whilst working, why did her superiors not do anything about that earlier?

DR YOUNG:

As I said, they are the things we have to work through. We know there can be people who have the disease with no symptoms. There can be people who have the disease with very, very mild symptoms. So I don't know at this point in time, what sort of symptoms she did or didn't have but I am taking a very, very cautious approach and ensuring that we spread that net very widely.

REPORTER:

What is the testing procedure for those residents? What is happening with them at this time?

DR YOUNG:

So they are all getting tested with a nasopharyngeal swab so to work out if they have any active virus now. So that's all being done as we speak. We have already had some results back from those people who were a little bit more concerned about because they did have some suggestive symptoms and they have been negative. We have not had any positive results yet from any of the testing that started last night.

REPORTER:

How long after the swab can they get the results of those tests?

DR YOUNG:

That's the test we are doing at the moment. We have flown in extra capacity this morning so we can do additional tests.

REPORTER:

Do you have any idea of whether she had the CovidSafe app?

DR YOUNG:

No, I don't have that information.

REPORTER:

Have the staff been using appropriate PPE at the centre?

DR YOUNG:

I don't have that information. That's all very, very important. This is so early still. We got this notification at 8.00pm last night s all of those questions that you are very, very sensibly asking, we don't have answers to, but I do want to just re-assure you that we are casting the net very widely here.

REPORTER:

Do we know why she travelled to Brisbane?

DR YOUNG:

Yes we do but that's confidential information that I am not at liberty to share.

REPORTER:

Are there flights that have been affected?

DR YOUNG:

There are no flights that she could have led to any transmissions because when she was on the flights going down to Brisbane and coming back, she was not in that infectious period. Whether there was someone else in that flight that she might have contracted it from, that's what we have to work through at the moment so I don't know. But she definitely was not infectious at the time when she was on either of those flights.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

At this stage I have no idea. That's all part of that contact tracing. Community members should not wait to get a phone call to say you've been in contact potentially with someone. They should be out there now, going and getting tested. So that is really important for anyone who's in Rockhampton this morning needs to go and get tested. They don't even need to worry about the timeframes that they might have come in contact. I'm saying to anyone in Rockhampton, if this morning you've got any symptoms that are suggestive of COVID-19 or a fever or a history of a fever, please go and get tested.

REPORTER:

And all 180 of those staff, are they all in home quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

That's all being worked through at the moment. So they're getting in contact with all of those staff and sorting that out now as we speak.

REPORTER:

Can you confirm if this centre went into lockdown earlier this year?

DR YOUNG:

No, I'm not sure. I know from 8 o'clock last night.

REPORTER:

And just on Bryce Cartwright, what sort of evidence did he provide for you to grant him a medical exemption given that he's an outspoken anti-vaxxer?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, his GP provided evidence.

REPORTER:

Is that in the form of a medical certificate, or did he have [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I'm not going into confidential information, but I can just tell you that his GP provided information that met the requirements for him to be exempted.

REPORTER:

Is this a win for anti-vaxxers then?

DR YOUNG:

Absolutely not. No. He had a contrary indication. So I said right from the start that if someone has a medical contraindication of course we're not going to require them to be vaccinated. That's rare, but it does happen. So he didn't get vaccinated because he had a medical contraindication.

REPORTER:

Have you been contacted by any players who are anti-vaxxers to be able to get an exemption?

DR YOUNG:

No, that's the only one. The other two people who didn't initially get vaccinated have now been vaccinated.

REPORTER:

When those restrictions on Fraser Island and Stradbroke and Moreton lift, will people be allowed to go camping?

DR YOUNG:

I believe if an announcement hasn't been made there will be one made fairly soon about those three specific locations. So we need to wait for the announcement.

REPORTER:

Sorry, back to Bryce Cartwright. Can you just clarify the timeframe of when you were approached about that and when you saw the medical certificate – like quickly did that happen?



DR YOUNG:

Yesterday.

REPORTER:

Earlier [inaudible] you mentioned that there was a 28-day mark for the two incubation periods. While Townsville has met that criteria, the rest of the state hasn't yet there are restrictions being lifted across the state. Can you explain why it's different for us to the rest of the state?

DR YOUNG:

Well it's no different for Townsville as to the rest of the state because, although you've had no active cases which is a fantastic achievement, you still do have a lot of people in quarantine. So you could have an active case tomorrow. So that's true of the state. The part of the state that we've treated differently is what we're calling the outback, which is as it sounds, it is the western part of Queensland, because they haven't had active cases and they haven't had cases in quarantine except for Mt Isa has had a very few number of cases there. So we know, and I think what's happened in Rockhampton last night, is a lesson to all of us that unless you lockdown a community so no one can travel in and out of that community, there is every chance and every likelihood that you'll see cases. That is not a problem because we have the systems in place to immediately, rapidly respond. But we all need to keep that in mind that you can't go and totally remove all of the restrictions anywhere until we've had no cases across our entire country and we have no one coming home from overseas. So it's a really difficult message that I can understand people querying but it's so important that we all continue to manage this disease as we have been so we can slowly remove those restrictions. But we will have to be cautious and there are some things that we're going to have in place for a long time, and that first one is that if you've got any symptoms you just have to isolate yourself and get tested. That's absolutely important. Maintaining social distancing is important, and good cough etiquette and hand hygiene, washing your hands, they're all so important and we're going to have to continue them because we don't know where our next case is going to come from.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] the idea that you should actually be locking down regional areas into... I don't want to say a north Queensland... but say if you couldn't travel outside of Townsville, you couldn't travel outside of Rocky, would that not mitigate that problem that happened in Rockhampton today?

DR YOUNG:

It would mitigate it but it would be absolutely terrible. You'd have to then sit down and think how are we going to manage our city – and you are such a big city and today we just heard how critical you were to dialysis services – you imagine locking down your city and not letting anyone in or out, the harm that would do to the outlying communities that are dependent on you as the city you are. So I just don't think it's possible. I really and truly don't.

REPORTER:

Can you clarify, like, people who are contact training, professional athletes such as boxers or wrestlers, how do they go about getting a concession to be able to contact train as such? Is that something that you could clarify there?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So each of those elite professional sports are coming through both at a national level and a state level to seek exemptions. So we've seen that from the NRL and they've put in place a very rigorous process to protect their players and to protect the community, then we've seen it with the AFL, then I've seen other groups coming through. And we're just methodically working through each one to see how that protects both the players, the support staff, the officials and of course the community. And we know that things can be done to protect everyone. And once those are all done and sorted then those sports can recommence. Now you would have seen also we're looking at community sports recommencing. That's harder because you play community sport and you're still part of the community and you're still going to work so we can't use the same processes that we're using for those elite sports where essentially they're going into quarantine except for when they're training or playing games.

REPORTER:

Sorry, you touched on the national body for the NRL and the AFL, what about those ones who are not backed by the national body, like for example a boxer or a wrestler, do you treat them differently?

DR YOUNG:

Well no, nationally they're looking at a whole range of sports. It doesn't matter whether there's a national body for those sports or not. They're looking at them and they're assessing them against the principles that the AHPPC, the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee, that I'm Queensland representative on has put together. So that's been done to try to assist so we have some commonality across the country. But ultimately the decision about whether a sport can recommence is up to that individual state. And you would have seen different decisions being made for some of those national sports – in Western Australia, in South Australia, in Queensland, in New South Wales, Victoria. So each state after its been looked at by the national group that's looking at all of the different sports makes their own decision.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...have they come to you with COVID-safe plans at all?

DR YOUNG:

Not yet, but I believe that they are and they might have actually come to some of my staff. So we'll be working with them to work through how we can make it as safe as possible. Because my view is the more we can get all aspects of our society to start moving back to normal business the better. Along, of course, it's done in a safe way in everyone involved. So that's our role – to work with all of these different groups to help it happen.



REPORTER:

And how [inaudible] V8's go ahead without any spectators?

DR YOUNG:

That unfortunately is what's going to have to happen with most events. It will be very, very hard to have spectators in place for pretty well most things. Of course, you can have spectators up to 10 but you can't have those large groups. Now as we go forward with the continued relaxation of restrictions those numbers can increase and you would have seen that in June it can go up to 20 with COVID-safe plans, that might be able to increase. Then we'll have to see what happens in July.

REPORTER:

Businesses in Townsville have called for more people to get back to work so they can support the businesses that are still open. When do you think that that will be safe?

DR YOUNG:

It's safe today for people to go back to work if they do everything they can....so it is safe for everyone to start considering how they can go back to work. But I do implore people – if you can work from home and it works for you, and it works for your employer then that's what you should continue to do. Because the more we can minimise movement of people the better. So it's important for our public transport system. It's important for all of our systems that if people can actually successfully work from home then they should keep doing that for a while longer. The other thing is workplaces could try and think about staggering work times so we could just expand that peak transport time over a much longer period. So just start thinking about how to stagger working times. That's all important. Then, also think about what you can do in the workplace. So a workplace is not bound by those social distancing restrictions. They never have been, but having said that, if they can be achieved it's really important that they are achieved. So think about...I know that in our society we've moved to hotdesking but thinking about cleaning the desk down between use so that everyone has plenty of cleaning equipment so they can give that desk a clean before a new worker uses it. Think about spreading workers out. So if you can manage that 1.5 metre distance, if you can manage that one person per four square meters that's a really, really good thing to do for your workers. But having said that, not all workplaces can do that and indeed, in some workplaces if you were to implement it, it could be dangerous because you need people to work in pairs for safety reasons for instance. So every single workplace is different so every single workplace will need a different response to how they can make their workplace as safe as possible. But if I could go back to that most important message of all – workplaces will be the safest they can be if people who are sick don't go to work. That is absolutely critical. So all workplaces should put in place a process so that workers know that if they're sick that they will not be going to work. They need to have a nice simple process that they can ring up their manager and say "*I am sick, I'm going to go out and get tested*". That's critical and if someone becomes sick while they're at work it's really important they immediately down tools and go and get tested. And we know that although you can transmit this virus for up to 48 hours before any symptoms we've not seen that as a big cause of transmission. So in theory, yes it can happen. In practice, we've not really seen so if people would just not come

to work when they're sick or if they become sick at work, immediately get home that will protect our workplaces and the workers in them.

REPORTER:

Just to clarify this Rockhampton nurse is isolation at home not in hospital?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, she's at home.

REPORTER:

And she never worked at any other State Government facility?

DR YOUNG:

They're all the sorts of things we're clarifying at the moment so we made need, as you've rightly pointed out there, we might have to broaden our contact tracing which is why I'm saying at this point if you're sick in Rockhampton get tested. Don't wait for a phone call.

REPORTER:

I know you've been here meeting with Hill and other...the Chamber of Commerce, what have you guys been discussing and can you enlighten us on what you've been [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Much as I've been talking to you here today about what a wonderful job Townsville Hospital and Health Service and the Public Health Unit has done, and the people in the town because the Public Health Unit can only do so much. It needs people to know when they're sick and to get tested. So there's been a fantastic response here in Townsville so therefore this is the time for Townsville to start doing everything you can to get business within the restrictions going again. That is so important. And really, the next month is when a lot of work's got to be done because it's in a months' time if everything goes well, in a months' time that businesses can really start going. That's when they can have up to 20 people and with a COVID-safe plan, more people. But they'll have to develop those plans, they're really important. So the next month is absolutely critical. Then the other thing I did talk to them about, and it would be good to get this message out, is you do have some big shopping centres here in Townsville. You're a big city. So be very careful in those big shopping centres. I know retailers themselves have been doing a really good job. They know how many people they can safely have in their shop. But outside there we've seen some evidence of some crowding occurring. You know, although food courts can't open for seated dining, people who are getting takeaway aren't necessarily moving away. We're starting to see a little bit of gathering in those areas so it's really important – this is not the time to go window shopping. This is the time to think “*what I need to buy today?*”. Go in, buy that, come out. Don't go and congregate yet. That'll happen and we'll start moving back to normal business but we've got to get there slowly. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier and Health Minister Steven Miles, Minister Coralee O'Rourke, Aaron Harper MP and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 15 May 2020

Duration: 37 minutes approx.

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Fantastic to be here in Townsville today. I had barely been sworn in when our local MPs here Aaron, Scott and Coralee got onto me and said they'd really appreciate if Jeannette and I could visit Townsville again. And so it is great to be here within my first week. We met yesterday with Townsville Enterprises Ltd, the Townsville Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor Jenny Hill and we had a very useful conversation about our staged recovery plan to reopen the economy and businesses here in Townsville and of course right across the state. We have a really great announcement here about services at the Townsville University Hospital that I would like to speak about first before giving you a COVID-19 update.

We are investing an additional \$4.8 million dollars to expand the dialysis services here at Townsville University hospital, taking us from 17 to 30 dialysis chairs. It will allow us to continue to meet the growth in demand for those services. Townsville, and the wider Townsville region, with a larger Indigenous population than many parts of the state has increased demands for dialysis and this will allow us to meet that demand. The unit currently serves 45 to 50 people a day and this will allow them to support even more patients. It's a sign that even during the pandemic, this government has continued to invest in more and better health services right across the state. We are not just focused on the pandemic response, although of course that is important, we need to continue to expand our health services and that is precisely what we have been doing. I will ask our local MPs to speak to this announcement, take any questions on that and then Jeannette and I will give that COVID update.

MINISTER O'ROURKE:

This is a fantastic announcement today and this is about making sure that we are really investing in high-quality healthcare here in the north. The expansion here, we know, will support those patients who require dialysis and we know that there is a disproportionately high number of Indigenous patients who require dialysis. So to be able to provide additional services in the north really goes towards closing the gap with the healthcare situation and really addressing and providing the support that is needed. So I welcome this. This also enables the start within the renal unit to provide emergency haemodialysis. This expansion also provides the medical staff in the renal unit to provide an emergency chair for haemodialysis. This is a fantastic announcement for the hospital, enabling high-quality

healthcare to be delivered to those who need it most and I welcome the announcement by the Health Minister today.

AARON HARPER:

It's fantastic to have the Deputy Premier and Health Minister and the Chief Health Officer back in Townsville. As we enter this weekend, with more easing of restrictions, with Stage I of our roadmap, I think it is important that we reinforce that people continue to do those very practical measures of social distancing, hand hygiene and, look, whilst we welcome the extended travel, 150 kilometres of travel, parks are open, people are able to go – limited numbers – to restaurant and cafes. But this morning, there was a new reported case in Rockhampton and of course, contact tracing will now commence because of that. I think that should send a very clear message that we are far from out of the woods on this. We need to be very cautious in our approach. If you go to a shopping centre and it is crowded, leave and come back another time. We need to absolutely not be complacent. We need to be very, very careful, cautious, in the way that we enter these stages so that we don't see outbreaks or clusters or a second wave. Townsville has done particularly well. We have still got some 42 people in quarantine but that doesn't mean that there is no risk out there. So I will just reinforce to the community, please continue those very good social distancing practices.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Is there any questions on the dialysis announcement? Otherwise I am happy to move onto the COVID-19 update. Right now in Queensland we have 17 active cases of COVID-19. In the last 24-hour period, we tested 3425 people. In our hospitals, in the south-east, we have six COVID-19 patients, three of those are in intensive care. The Premier has already confirmed this morning that we have added two new cases to our total for today. One of those is a dated case from Western Australia which has been added to Queensland's total because they are a Queensland resident. The other though is cause for some concern. We have a further confirmed case in Rockhampton. The person involved is a nurse at a state-run aged care facility, the North Rockhampton Aged Care Facility. The result from that test was confirmed at 8pm last night.

And the health service along with the Department of Health, Queensland Health, have responded very rapidly overnight. They have sent a rapid response team from Brisbane, they are working to quarantine any staff and residents who may be contacts of that individual. They are rapidly testing a large number of people to identify whether anyone else has been affected. The centre is currently locked down and the staff have been, any staff in contact, are in quarantine and have been tested. The last confirmed case in Rockhampton was on the 30th of March. So something like seven weeks since they had their last case, their last active case was considered recovered on the 1st of May. And this just serves to underline that even after cities have long periods of time without active cases, things can turn very, very quickly. Somebody cannot return from another part of the state, be tested and found to have been infected and then we need to be able to respond as a health service incredibly rapidly to ensure that that does not lead to an outbreak. That is the work that is currently under way in Rockhampton right now and I'd like to invite the Chief Health Officer to outline further.

DR YOUNG:

There are two reasons I'm here in Townsville today. First, the very exciting news about the expansion of the dialysis unit, so important for a community. We know in Australia, here in Queensland that we are very good at treating chronic kidney disease. But we need those dialysis facilities to be able to do that and to offer it to everyone. That is excellent we've seen that increase in the number of chairs here in such an important city for North Queensland. The second is to commend Townsville in the way they responded to the cases to date, so Townsville to date has had 24 cases, 23 of those 24 cases were managed so that there was no ongoing transmission. That has got to be a world first, world-class response. Now, I'm here to say we must continue doing that. So, we're hearing today we've seen a case, out of nowhere, happen and Rockhampton. Rockhampton to date as managed their cases beautifully. Now they have another case and they need to manage that case which is what they're doing. And so that is a very important lesson for all of us across the state. We have not beaten this virus yet. But, we have fantastic systems and responses in place so we can.

Here today, I'm working with the communities involved to make sure that this new case we have detected overnight in Rockhampton is managed so that we don't get ongoing transmission. The first thing that's happening is that aged care facility is immediately working to assess every single one of their residents - there are 115 in the facility - every single one of their staff - there are 180 healthcare workers who work in that facility - to make sure that today, none of them have the infection. Then we will work with them as to which of those staff members and residents need to immediately go into quarantine for 14 days, because we know the incubation period of course. The healthcare worker who was diagnosed last night had been working in that facility while unwell, which is very unfortunate, and we are clarifying what exactly happened there. But we will now work with that facility and Central Queensland is a very good hospital and health service and they know what they're doing and they're sorting through. I have sent a very senior experienced public health physician from Brisbane to assist them in working through all of those issues to make sure that we manage this. Also, we know that healthcare worker is also living in the community, and they will have been out and about in the community.

So, I'm asking every single person who lives in Rockhampton, who has any symptoms at all to immediately go forward, go and see their own GP or go to one of the fever clinics and get tested. That is really important. We need to see whether there are any other cases that have occurred in Rockhampton as a result of this particular individual. Rockhampton has not had an active case for a number of weeks, so this is brand-new. We will just have to work that through. It's a very important lesson for all of us across the state of Queensland. We don't know where the next case will happen. We can send in response teams, we have them all organised and we can do that at any time, but we can only do that if we know about the cases. Everyone in Queensland, please come forward if you've got any symptoms at all of acute respiratory infection, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, or a fever or a history of a fever. Please come forward and get tested. That's really important. You will then need to be in isolation until you get that result but in most parts of Queensland, due to the enormous amount of testing capacity we now have in place, that shouldn't be too long. It is so important. If we pick up cases immediately that are potentially infectious, then we can minimise the impact on the rest of the community. I can't overstate that. That is the most important thing all of us can do for the community, if we are unwell, just isolate yourself and get tested. Wait for that result before going back into the community.

Number two, wherever possible, maintain social distancing. 1.5 metres between yourself and other people and in enclosed spaces, one person per four square metres. Really do that. If you do have to cough, always cough into your elbow and not into your hands because then you will touch surfaces with your hands. You could spread the virus when you've coughed onto a surface and someone else pick it up. Wash your hands regularly. That will protect you. You don't know where the virus might be. We are releasing a lot of those very onerous restrictions this weekend, but we need to keep alert. It is really important because if this doesn't work, if we can't safely release these restrictions, it will make it very difficult to go on and put more of those restrictions, release more those restrictions as we go forward. This weekend, everyone in Queensland, if you go somewhere and it's crowded, please just go somewhere else. Really use your common sense which Queenslanders are known for. We've managed this virus beautifully till now. We believe we'll continue to manage it beautifully but it means every single one of us has to play their part. Thank you

REPORTER:

Is the facility in question, is it the North Rockhampton nursing home?

DR YOUNG:

That's right, the North Rockhampton nursing home. It's actually located in the northern part of Rockhampton is the facility of concern

REPORTER:

And do you know where the nurse may have picked up the virus?

DR YOUNG:

We are still confirming that but we believe she probably picked it up in Brisbane. She had a trip down to Brisbane during a period she would have picked up the infection from where we know she started to have symptoms. That is not confirmed yet but that is where we believe she picked it up.

REPORTER:

Do you have any idea of the timeframe that she had been working for? Like was she working up until yesterday?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, she was working up until yesterday.

REPORTER:

How concerning is that?

DR YOUNG:

It's very, very concerning and all I can say is, to everyone out there, if you are sick with any symptoms, it doesn't matter how mild they are for this particular infection, even with mild symptoms, you can transmit this infection to other people so if you have any symptoms, please just be ultra-cautious, isolate yourself at home and get tested.

REPORTER:

Will you be following up with state government and public workers regarding the message of not continuing to work whilst infectious?

DR YOUNG:

Off course I will be. Yes.

REPORTER:

Would you ask for disciplinary action or something like that?

DR YOUNG:

That is up to the hospital and health service, they'll work through all of that. We don't know all the facts here this stage so it's important before we jump to any conclusions that we go and work through the actual facts and work out what happened.

REPORTER:

Do you know how long [inaudible] potentially exposing people at the nursing home?

DR YOUNG:

We believe that she was infectious from the 3rd of May.

REPORTER:

If she was infectious from the 3rd of May, how [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Sorry I didn't hear.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] how was it able to happen if this was [inaudible] 3rd of May

DR YOUNG:

Right so, she was contagious from the 3rd of May. She actually had symptoms from 5 May so we also go back 48 hours before the onset on symptoms. We believe, remembering this is all only happened last night so we have to go and confirm all these but to our understanding at this point in time, we believe that she was infectious from 3 May onwards. In terms of why it took so long for her to get tested, we are working through all of that now. That's why we are taking an extremely cautious approach with all of the residents and the staff in that facility.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. That's all of what we are working out at the moment but we are taking a very, very cautious approach here and the hospital and health services are doing an excellent job. At this

point in time we are regarding all 115 residents and all 180 staff as potentially having being in contact. When we get through the details, I'm sure we'll find that the numbers are much smaller than that but I think the most cautious approach is just take the most broad approach. Now in terms of the community, again we will be doing contact tracing but my message to the community is, it doesn't matter whether of not you may or may not have come into contact with this particular individual, today, I want anyone in Rockhampton who has symptoms at all suggestive of Covid-19 to go and get tested. That's really important.

REPORTER:

If she was visibly ill or unwell whilst working, why did her superiors not do anything about that earlier?

DR YOUNG:

As I said, they are the things we have to work through. We know there can be people who have the disease with no symptoms. There can be people who have the disease with very, very mild symptoms. So I don't know at this point in time, what sort of symptoms she did or didn't have but I am taking a very, very cautious approach and ensuring that we spread that net very widely.

REPORTER:

What is the testing procedure for those residents? What is happening with them at this time?

DR YOUNG:

So they are all getting tested with a nasopharyngeal swab so to work out if they have any active virus now. So that's all being done as we speak. We have already had some results back from those people who were a little bit more concerned about because they did have some suggestive symptoms and they have been negative. We have not had any positive results yet from any of the testing that started last night.

REPORTER:

How long after the swab can they get the results of those tests?

DR YOUNG:

That's the test we are doing at the moment. We have flown in extra capacity this morning so we can do additional tests.

REPORTER:

Do you have any idea of whether she had the CovidSafe app?

DR YOUNG:

No, I don't have that information.

REPORTER:

Have the staff been using appropriate PPE at the centre?

DR YOUNG:

I don't have that information. That's all very, very important. This is so early still. We got this notification at 8.00pm last night s all of those questions that you are very, very sensibly asking, we don't have answers to, but I do want to just re-assure you that we are casting the net very widely here.

REPORTER:

Do we know why she travelled to Brisbane?

DR YOUNG:

Yes we do but that's confidential information that I am not at liberty to share.

REPORTER:

Are there flights that have been affected?

DR YOUNG:

There are no flights that she could have led to any transmissions because when she was on the flights going down to Brisbane and coming back, she was not in that infectious period. Whether there was someone else in that flight that she might have contracted it from, that's what we have to work through at the moment so I don't know. But she definitely was not infectious at the time when she was on either of those flights.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

At this stage I have no idea. That's all part of that contact tracing. Community members should not wait to get a phone call to say you've been in contact potentially with someone. They should be out there now, going and getting tested. So that is really important for anyone who's in Rockhampton this morning needs to go and get tested. They don't even need to worry about the timeframes that they might have come in contact. I'm saying to anyone in Rockhampton, if this morning you've got any symptoms that are suggestive of COVID-19 or a fever or a history of a fever, please go and get tested.

REPORTER:

And all 180 of those staff, are they all in home quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

That's all being worked through at the moment. So they're getting in contact with all of those staff and sorting that out now as we speak.

REPORTER:

Can you confirm if this centre went into lockdown earlier this year?

DR YOUNG:

No, I'm not sure. I know from 8 o'clock last night.

REPORTER:

And just on Bryce Cartwright, what sort of evidence did he provide for you to grant him a medical exemption given that he's an outspoken anti-vaxxer?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, his GP provided evidence.

REPORTER:

Is that in the form of a medical certificate, or did he have [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I'm not going into confidential information, but I can just tell you that his GP provided information that met the requirements for him to be exempted.

REPORTER:

Is this a win for anti-vaxxers then?

DR YOUNG:

Absolutely not. No. He had a contrary indication. So I said right from the start that if someone has a medical contraindication of course we're not going to require them to be vaccinated. That's rare, but it does happen. So he didn't get vaccinated because he had a medical contraindication.

REPORTER:

Have you been contacted by any players who are anti-vaxxers to be able to get an exemption?

DR YOUNG:

No, that's the only one. The other two people who didn't initially get vaccinated have now been vaccinated.

REPORTER:

When those restrictions on Fraser Island and Stradbroke and Moreton lift, will people be allowed to go camping?

DR YOUNG:

I believe if an announcement hasn't been made there will be one made fairly soon about those three specific locations. So we need to wait for the announcement.

REPORTER:

Sorry, back to Bryce Cartwright. Can you just clarify the timeframe of when you were approached about that and when you saw the medical certificate – like quickly did that happen?



DR YOUNG:

Yesterday.

REPORTER:

Earlier [inaudible] you mentioned that there was a 28-day mark for the two incubation periods. While Townsville has met that criteria, the rest of the state hasn't yet there are restrictions being lifted across the state. Can you explain why it's different for us to the rest of the state?

DR YOUNG:

Well it's no different for Townsville as to the rest of the state because, although you've had no active cases which is a fantastic achievement, you still do have a lot of people in quarantine. So you could have an active case tomorrow. So that's true of the state. The part of the state that we've treated differently is what we're calling the outback, which is as it sounds, it is the western part of Queensland, because they haven't had active cases and they haven't had cases in quarantine except for Mt Isa has had a very few number of cases there. So we know, and I think what's happened in Rockhampton last night, is a lesson to all of us that unless you lockdown a community so no one can travel in and out of that community, there is every chance and every likelihood that you'll see cases. That is not a problem because we have the systems in place to immediately, rapidly respond. But we all need to keep that in mind that you can't go and totally remove all of the restrictions anywhere until we've had no cases across our entire country and we have no one coming home from overseas. So it's a really difficult message that I can understand people querying but it's so important that we all continue to manage this disease as we have been so we can slowly remove those restrictions. But we will have to be cautious and there are some things that we're going to have in place for a long time, and that first one is that if you've got any symptoms you just have to isolate yourself and get tested. That's absolutely important. Maintaining social distancing is important, and good cough etiquette and hand hygiene, washing your hands, they're all so important and we're going to have to continue them because we don't know where our next case is going to come from.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] the idea that you should actually be locking down regional areas into... I don't want to say a north Queensland... but say if you couldn't travel outside of Townsville, you couldn't travel outside of Rocky, would that not mitigate that problem that happened in Rockhampton today?

DR YOUNG:

It would mitigate it but it would be absolutely terrible. You'd have to then sit down and think how are we going to manage our city – and you are such a big city and today we just heard how critical you were to dialysis services – you imagine locking down your city and not letting anyone in or out, the harm that would do to the outlying communities that are dependent on you as the city you are. So I just don't think it's possible. I really and truly don't.

REPORTER:

Can you clarify, like, people who are contact training, professional athletes such as boxers or wrestlers, how do they go about getting a concession to be able to contact train as such? Is that something that you could clarify there?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So each of those elite professional sports are coming through both at a national level and a state level to seek exemptions. So we've seen that from the NRL and they've put in place a very rigorous process to protect their players and to protect the community, then we've seen it with the AFL, then I've seen other groups coming through. And we're just methodically working through each one to see how that protects both the players, the support staff, the officials and of course the community. And we know that things can be done to protect everyone. And once those are all done and sorted then those sports can recommence. Now you would have seen also we're looking at community sports recommencing. That's harder because you play community sport and you're still part of the community and you're still going to work so we can't use the same processes that we're using for those elite sports where essentially they're going into quarantine except for when they're training or playing games.

REPORTER:

Sorry, you touched on the national body for the NRL and the AFL, what about those ones who are not backed by the national body, like for example a boxer or a wrestler, do you treat them differently?

DR YOUNG:

Well no, nationally they're looking at a whole range of sports. It doesn't matter whether there's a national body for those sports or not. They're looking at them and they're assessing them against the principles that the AHPPC, the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee, that I'm Queensland representative on has put together. So that's been done to try to assist so we have some commonality across the country. But ultimately the decision about whether a sport can recommence is up to that individual state. And you would have seen different decisions being made for some of those national sports – in Western Australia, in South Australia, in Queensland, in New South Wales, Victoria. So each state after its been looked at by the national group that's looking at all of the different sports makes their own decision.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...have they come to you with COVID-safe plans at all?

DR YOUNG:

Not yet, but I believe that they are and they might have actually come to some of my staff. So we'll be working with them to work through how we can make it as safe as possible. Because my view is the more we can get all aspects of our society to start moving back to normal business the better. Along, of course, it's done in a safe way in everyone involved. So that's our role – to work with all of these different groups to help it happen.



REPORTER:

And how [inaudible] V8's go ahead without any spectators?

DR YOUNG:

That unfortunately is what's going to have to happen with most events. It will be very, very hard to have spectators in place for pretty well most things. Of course, you can have spectators up to 10 but you can't have those large groups. Now as we go forward with the continued relaxation of restrictions those numbers can increase and you would have seen that in June it can go up to 20 with COVID-safe plans, that might be able to increase. Then we'll have to see what happens in July.

REPORTER:

Businesses in Townsville have called for more people to get back to work so they can support the businesses that are still open. When do you think that that will be safe?

DR YOUNG:

It's safe today for people to go back to work if they do everything they can....so it is safe for everyone to start considering how they can go back to work. But I do implore people – if you can work from home and it works for you, and it works for your employer then that's what you should continue to do. Because the more we can minimise movement of people the better. So it's important for our public transport system. It's important for all of our systems that if people can actually successfully work from home then they should keep doing that for a while longer. The other thing is workplaces could try and think about staggering work times so we could just expand that peak transport time over a much longer period. So just start thinking about how to stagger working times. That's all important. Then, also think about what you can do in the workplace. So a workplace is not bound by those social distancing restrictions. They never have been, but having said that, if they can be achieved it's really important that they are achieved. So think about...I know that in our society we've moved to hotdesking but thinking about cleaning the desk down between use so that everyone has plenty of cleaning equipment so they can give that desk a clean before a new worker uses it. Think about spreading workers out. So if you can manage that 1.5 metre distance, if you can manage that one person per four square meters that's a really, really good thing to do for your workers. But having said that, not all workplaces can do that and indeed, in some workplaces if you were to implement it, it could be dangerous because you need people to work in pairs for safety reasons for instance. So every single workplace is different so every single workplace will need a different response to how they can make their workplace as safe as possible. But if I could go back to that most important message of all – workplaces will be the safest they can be if people who are sick don't go to work. That is absolutely critical. So all workplaces should put in place a process so that workers know that if they're sick that they will not be going to work. They need to have a nice simple process that they can ring up their manager and say "*I am sick, I'm going to go out and get tested*". That's critical and if someone becomes sick while they're at work it's really important they immediately down tools and go and get tested. And we know that although you can transmit this virus for up to 48 hours before any symptoms we've not seen that as a big cause of transmission. So in theory, yes it can happen. In practice, we've not really seen so if people would just not come

to work when they're sick or if they become sick at work, immediately get home that will protect our workplaces and the workers in them.

REPORTER:

Just to clarify this Rockhampton nurse is isolation at home not in hospital?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, she's at home.

REPORTER:

And she never worked at any other State Government facility?

DR YOUNG:

They're all the sorts of things we're clarifying at the moment so we made need, as you've rightly pointed out there, we might have to broaden our contact tracing which is why I'm saying at this point if you're sick in Rockhampton get tested. Don't wait for a phone call.

REPORTER:

I know you've been here meeting with Hill and other...the Chamber of Commerce, what have you guys been discussing and can you enlighten us on what you've been [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Much as I've been talking to you here today about what a wonderful job Townsville Hospital and Health Service and the Public Health Unit has done, and the people in the town because the Public Health Unit can only do so much. It needs people to know when they're sick and to get tested. So there's been a fantastic response here in Townsville so therefore this is the time for Townsville to start doing everything you can to get business within the restrictions going again. That is so important. And really, the next month is when a lot of work's got to be done because it's in a months' time if everything goes well, in a months' time that businesses can really start going. That's when they can have up to 20 people and with a COVID-safe plan, more people. But they'll have to develop those plans, they're really important. So the next month is absolutely critical. Then the other thing I did talk to them about, and it would be good to get this message out, is you do have some big shopping centres here in Townsville. You're a big city. So be very careful in those big shopping centres. I know retailers themselves have been doing a really good job. They know how many people they can safely have in their shop. But outside there we've seen some evidence of some crowding occurring. You know, although food courts can't open for seated dining, people who are getting takeaway aren't necessarily moving away. We're starting to see a little bit of gathering in those areas so it's really important – this is not the time to go window shopping. This is the time to think “*what I need to buy today?*”. Go in, buy that, come out. Don't go and congregate yet. That'll happen and we'll start moving back to normal business but we've got to get there slowly. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Keppel MP Brittany Lauga,
Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 18 May 2020

Duration: 38 minutes

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Overnight we are confirming that we have two additional cases of COVID-19 in Queensland, both are in the south east, one in Metro South and one in the West Moreton HHS boundaries. Both are female, both have been overseas recently and that is considered the most likely source of infection, although of course we'll continue to investigate that. That means that of all of all of the cases reported in the last week, all bar one were acquired overseas, and that is the one case here in the central Queensland HHS. That brings our total in Queensland to 1057, 13 active cases, we're down to four in hospital and just one in ICU, which of course is fantastic news. In the last 24 hour reporting period, we tested a further 1534 patients. As you're aware, the Premier asked the Chief Health Officer and I to travel here to Rockhampton to look into matters surrounding the positive case here at the North Rockhampton Nursing Centre. We've had an initial briefing with the chief executive and other HHS staff just now, and the Chief Health Officer will continue to have those discussions today. What I can report is that there has been an incredible effort from the HHS, from Queensland Health and from the Ambulance Service since 8pm on Thursday night when we were notified of this positive case. 35 residents have now been moved to other facilities here in Rockhampton, including the Mater, Hillcrest and the Rockhampton Hospital. That has allowed residents to be moved around within the facility and allowed us to locate 39 of the Ivy Baker, sorry of the Westwood residents in private rooms where they can be isolated with their own bathrooms and infection control can be implemented. There are further residents being moved to today around within in the centre and we expect that to be completed by mid-morning. That means that all 39 of those residents who are thought to be contacts of the positive case will have single bedrooms and bathrooms. 42 close contacts have been identified and tested, the centre itself is in lockdown today. All tests have returned negative, in addition 763 Rockhampton locals have sought testing at the three testing locations here available in Rockhampton and all of those that have been returned are negative. The Chief Health Officer will go to in more detail the numbers of residents and staff being tested and the one remaining staff member to be tested. The nursing centre and the HHS have set up a dedicated team to work with residents and their families, that includes nursing and social work staff. And so if you have a family member here at the centre and you would like any information, 24 hours seven days a week, you should contact 13 HEALTH, and they will be able to put you through to the dedicated teams. We've also deployed iPads into the centre so that families can continue to retain contact with their family members who are residents here, but who will be locked down for some time potentially. The HHS has set up a medical command centre which will

allow them to monitor patients and residents remotely throughout the lockdown period. We have despatched from elsewhere in Queensland Health 20 additional staff to assist the nursing centre to implement more like a clinical level of staffing here within the aged care centre. You've seen over the weekend QAS supporting the operation, we continue to have QAS resources available, as well as aeromedical evacuation if required, and here in the central Queensland region we also have the Gladstone Mater which the state has committed to purchase and at this stage is available for the COVID response and will be used if required. The chief executive has assured me that the HHS has already commenced an investigation, however I can also confirm today that in addition I have asked the Director-General to commission an independent investigation into this matter. We want to understand exactly how it happened, what went wrong, why it went wrong and how we can make sure it never happens again, not just at the 16 aged care facilities run by HHSs, but also at all of our other hundreds of Queensland Health sites. We need to ensure that all of our patients and residents, everyone in our care, as well as our staff are kept safe and are aware of their obligations always, but particularly heightened obligations during this pandemic. I know Brittany wants to say something briefly and then the Chief Health Officer will provide you with more details and be available to answer questions.

BRITTANY LAUGA:

Thanks, Deputy Premier. Good morning everyone. Brittany Lauga, State Member for Keppel. It has been a challenging and sad weekend for Queenslanders after we had a case on Friday. But I want to thank the hospital service and the ambulance service for all the work they have done over the weekend. So rapidly, they put their rapped activation - rapid activation plan in place and testing and staff notified and we had families notified. There has been a huge exercise that's been undertaking here over the weekend and in central Queensland. Can I thank every central Queensland who turned out on the weekend to be tested. It is critically important and I ask all Rockhampton residents even if they have mild symptoms to go and be tested for COVID-19. You can tested at the Capricorn coast hospital, Rockhampton hospital and the drive through clinic established by the HHS to get that really quick test undertaken. You can present to your GP as well and those GP clinics and the hospitals ask the patients do call ahead before going in for testing. Can I thank the nursing staff, health care workers and HHS staff who have worked... Can I thank all of the HHS staff, the health care workers, the nurses, everyone who worked quickly over the weekend to test and contain the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

DR YOUNG:

Queensland has had two new cases confirmed overnight, both of them in people who recently returned from overseas, just confirming that at the moment but I believe that to be the case. We therefore, in the last 14 days, have had 14 new cases confirmed in Queensland and 13 of those 14 have been acquired overseas. It is really important though that everyone considered getting tested whether or not you've been overseas. If you have any symptoms, no matter how mild or you're concerned it is vital to immediately come forward and be tested. We've seen it happen here in Rockhampton over the last three days, which is excellent. Please, continue coming forward in Rockhampton, because we do have that one acquired case that has been acquired somewhere in Queensland. We don't know where, so it is really important that

people here in Rockhampton come forward and be tested, and, indeed, anywhere through the state. We have enormous testing capacity now in Queensland. So, we need to use that to protect everyone. So, here in Rockhampton, the hospital and health service has done a tremendous job to act very, very quickly when they were notified of that confirmed case on Thursday night. So, all residents who were in contact or potentially in contact with that enrolled nurse have now been moved into single accommodation with private access to a bathroom. That means, for that to happen, other residents, unfortunately, had to be moved out of the facilities to three other facilities, to the two private hospitals in town and to the Rockhampton Hospital where they are being looked after in single rooms with private bathrooms. That's important as well. We will now go forward, over the next 14 days, from last Thursday, to assess all of the residents and all of the staff and will have a very, very low threshold for testing any of them who develop any symptoms at all. Now, all of the 114 residents who were in the facility at the time that the enrolled nurse was working in the facility have been tested and all of them are negative, which is very good news. Plus, all of the staff who have worked in the facility for the last month have now been tested except for one, who's been on leave and as soon as they come back, they'll be tested. All of those staff have been tested and are negative, except we haven't tested that one remaining staffer member so that is really, really important and we'll continue to do all that work with the hospital and health service. We'll continue to provide every resource the hospital and health service would like to be able to manage this response. Already, 20 nurses have come up from metropolitan Brisbane to assist in the response because the response here, in the nursing centre, has now turned into an acute response, which means that we have a lot more nurses on duty than we would normally see in an aged care facility. There are other nurses who have also volunteered to come and assist. We've had enormous response from across the state from people who are able and ready to come and assist Rockhampton. And this part of our preparedness to deal with this virus. So we know there are three things we must have in place in our state to combat this virus. First, we need testing capacity and need people to utilise that testing capacity. That is vital. Secondly, we need contact tracing and we have two thousand people who can contact trace in this state who are trained so we know we can do that. And I ask every single Queenslanders to download the COVIDSafe app which indeed I have done and all of my family members have done. That is very important. To assist us as another tool to contact trace. And the third is we need the capability to put in a rapid response and of course, we have done that since Thursday. That rapid response is here in place in Rockhampton. So we've seen a tremendous response. We do need to see where this went wrong because we need to make sure that we learn from that and that we have that process sorted for every single one of our aged care facilities in Queensland. We know that the residents in aged care facilities are amongst one of the most vulnerable groups to getting appalling outcomes if they get infected by this virus. So that work is also happening. I'm happy to take any questions.

REPORTER:

Is there any chance that this nurse was a false-positive?

DR YOUNG:

No there is absolutely no chance of that. This test was initially done by Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology, SNP, who are one of the best private pathology firms in Australia, probably in the world. They were one of the first private firms in Australia to stand up testing. They are a very, very competent, experienced pathology firm and we are very fortunate to have them here based in Queensland. as well as that we then went ahead and did a gene expert test because the enrolled nurse, very willingly, has been cooperating ever since she was tested positive and she allowed us to do a second test on her. And again, that was confirmed positive by the laboratory here in Rockhampton. There is no way at all that that was a false-positive. It was absolutely a confirmed positive result.

REPORTER:

What other explanations do you have for why the nurse was [inaudible]...but also after she was tested? That's obviously been of particular concern.

DR YOUNG:

I've been very disappointed that that happened so now it is very important, not only is the local Hospital and Health Service looking into how that happened but there'll be an external, independent investigation, independent of the Hospital and Health Service looking into what happened.

REPORTER:

Do you know this morning – did management know that she got that test and then came back, or did she get the test on her own accord and then come back and only notify management when she got her positive result?

DR YOUNG:

That's a very, very important question that's being looked at now.

REPORTER:

How is the broader community contact tracing going at the moment? Do you have figures on how those tests are going?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So all of those close contacts that she saw in the community have now been tested and they're all negative. But that doesn't mean that people can't now still get infected. We all know that the incubation period is 14 days. So everyone in the Rockhampton community must come forward. I plead with you, please come forward and get tested no matter how mild your symptoms might be. If you wake up in the morning and think "Is that a sore throat because I spoke to much yesterday or is it a sore throat because I might have COVID" – get tested. Don't second guess yourself. If you have any symptoms at all or any fever or any history of fever – so, not everyone has thermometers. If you don't have a thermometer but you have some rigors, some sweats, some shakes just come and get tested. You will not be turned away from any fever clinic here in Rockhampton or Central Queensland. Even if you can't describe your symptoms, you will get tested. So please, everyone get tested.

REPORTER:

When did management realise the nurse had the test? [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That's all part of the investigation. At the moment my absolute focus is on making sure those 114 residents are as safe as we can possibly make them now that we are aware of this having happened. My other focus is to make sure that every single person in Rockhampton is as safe as possible and the best way to ensure that is for people to come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

You said before that there have been nurses from across the state who have put their hand up to come assist here in Rockhampton. Can you describe where about those nurses [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yep, some 20 nurses came up from metropolitan Brisbane. So Metro North and Metro South. And we've got another three that are organised from elsewhere, 13 sorry organised from elsewhere in the state who will be coming up, and there has been a lot more offers.

REPORTER:

Has the nurse subject to [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That's all part of the investigation that is currently occurring. But we need to know that temperatures are too late. Please, please, no-one think that a temperature check is enough. I know we've all seen those pictures out there in the media of people being screened as they go into all sorts of facilities, as they go through airports, as they go through shopping centres. There's a lot of temperature checking happening which is excellent. But it is insufficient. A lot of people can go through their entire disease never spiking a fever. So that is a very...that is not a particularly useful exclusion criteria. People need to check if they've got symptoms – they can be as mild as a tickle in the throat – we've seen that. As mild as a very dry cough – and I know some people have confused their normal asthma or hayfever as not being COVID-19 and then it has been proven to be COVID-19. So any respiratory symptom, it is really important to be tested. In Rockhampton today, this is the time. If you have any symptom, even if you think it is your normal lung disease, or your normal hayfever or your normal when it gets cold – it's not ever cold in Rockhampton – but even today is a bit chilly – some people get a reaction to the cold. Get tested.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

We don't know when people have the COVID-Safe app because it is such confidential, private information. I don't know about that particular enrolled nurse and we'll find that out. But at this stage, it's particularly useful the COVID-Safe app as we know across the whole country the number is only around six million – that's not enough. So it will be an additional tool if someone has it, we can look at who they've come into contact with. But if the people

they've come into contact with don't have it then we won't know about those people. So it is really, really important that every single Queenslander downloads the app as soon as possible.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

At this stage we still don't know whether she contracted the infection on one of her two flights that she was on to go down to Brisbane and back to Rockhampton, or whether it was in Brisbane itself. We don't know. At this stage she's an community acquired case, we know it is unlikely she acquired it here in Rockhampton because it has been so long since you've had a confirmed case. But of course, that still is possible. We do know that people with asymptomatic disease which is why we're taking such a rapid firm response here for the facility, we know people can have asymptomatic disease. No symptoms at all, and can spread the virus. It's unlikely, we know it's not a major driver of spread but it definitely can happen.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

We don't need to track people because of her on those flights, because we know absolutely without any shadow of a doubt that she was not infectious on those flights. So we don't need to contact people who were on those flights. But at this stage, she might have been able to contract the infection on those flights, because we just don't know. We've not found an epi-length for her yet.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes it is. They are the cases that worry me. Today in Queensland we have 42 cases right from the word go that we have not been able to find an epi-link for. So we know we are getting cases out there in the community...this is the only case in the past fortnight where we have not been able to find an epi-link, and we more cases earlier on when we had those 60 cases a day where we wouldn't find epi-links. So this is why we cannot assume we've beaten this virus – we haven't. It's unlikely that we will ever beat this virus. We will have to find ways of managing it. And the hope of course is for a vaccine to assist us with that. But as we go forward that's why it is so important...don't think you live somewhere, say Townsville...Townsville has not had a case for quite a while, don't think, oh, I live in Townsville so therefore I don't have to worry that that sore throat or that cough I've got is COVID-19, it could very easily be COVID-19. In actual fact, we have possible got more respiratory disease in our state at the moment due to COVID-19 than we have due to flu. We

have had so many people get vaccinated this year for flu, and all the social distancing has meant that people haven't spread flu. So today, if you have got respiratory symptoms, there's every chance it's more likely due to COVID-19 than it is due to anything else.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, not surprised. I'm heartened, but I'm not yet relieved if that makes sense? We need to go through these next 14 days and see what happens. We've got a lot of history from other aged care facilities that have had outbreaks and had cases, and we've learnt from that history and we're making sure we implement absolutely everything we can here in this facility. And, I very much hope that we don't end up with a single other case here. But if we do, we have plans in place to manage that and to deal with it.

REPORTER:

How long until you confirm if the nurse is suspended or fined for breaching the quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

She hasn't breached quarantine that I'm aware of...

REPORTER:

After having the test and then coming to work, sorry.

DR YOUNG:

That is part of the investigation and that will be sorted. Since she had that confirmed result, she has been extremely cooperative, and has worked very closely with us and indeed agreed to a second test. So she has been very cooperative since she had that positive result. Prior to then, we need to work out what exactly happened.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...will she be suspended until that investigation is complete?

DR YOUNG:

That will depend on what is found as part of the investigation.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

She has not worked at any other facility in the period that we're concerned about. No, she has not.

REPORTER:

When will the findings of those investigations be made public [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

As soon as we've got those results we'll be working through them because I want to make sure that any lessons that are learnt from here we share across our state so it doesn't happen anywhere else. If there are lesson to be learnt.

REPORTER:

How long could a lockdown last [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

At this point it will be 14 days, but given these are particularly vulnerable residents, and we know their immune response is always very muted, we'll continue that lockdown longer than those 14 days. We'll be ultimately cautious.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes they will have multiple tests while they're in this period.

REPORTER:

Could you outline the investigation, its length and what's involved?

DR YOUNG:

No, that is being all worked through at the moment. So the hospital and health service has already started their investigation to immediately get some answers, and the Director-General is sorting out an independent investigation.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] do you think interstate travel [inaudible] September or even longer?

DR YOUNG:

I don't know how long interstate travel will remain in this current situation. I suspect it will be to at least July. We will then need to see how things are travelling, how they're progressing in other states.

REPORTER:

Just on that and that's interesting because the Premier was a lot of morning television this morning saying I'm taking the expert advice on not making a decision and she said September.

DR YOUNG:

Yep.

REPORTER:

So these decisions, is that her decision or is that your advice?

DR YOUNG:

My advice is that we need to look at this very carefully, and our Premier is being extremely cautious. She is taking every single bit of advice that I've provided to her, and she has been fantastic in doing that. So the earliest, the absolute earliest – I think it's highly unlikely – but maybe New South Wales and Victoria could get all their problems sorted – we see at the moment that there are increasing numbers of cases still in Victoria, but if they were today, we're the 16th of May, sorry I've forgotten the... 18th of May, I apologise, today where the 18th of May, July is still two months off... things could because as I've been saying from the word go, what we would need is to see no cases for two incubation periods. So, we've got a couple of incubation periods between now and then. So, best case scenario, July. But I think it is very, very, very unlikely, and that's what I have advised the Premier directly. And so she has said September, so I'm sure she is correct and I'm wrong. It would be very hard to see interstate travel could be in place in July. That's the absolute earliest. But I think it's very, very, very unlikely and that is what I have advised the Premier directly. So she has said September, I'm sure she is correct and I'm wrong. I think it's very... it would be very hard to see that interstate travel could be in place in July. That's the absolute earliest.

REPORTER:

Do you think there could a chance for a bubble of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory given that we're kinds of all a little bit further ahead than New South Wales and Victoria?

DR YOUNG:

That would possibly be more up to them than to me. Because we are still seeing cases as we've seen here in Rockhampton. They are not. So I would suspect they will be making that decision, not Queensland. Similarly Queensland will be making the decision about New South Wales and Victoria. It won't be New South Wales or Victoria making that decision. So

those states that have not had cases for a lengthy period of time that another case...another state is in the same situation they are.

REPORTER:

Just on advice that you've given as well. [inaudible]...is this something that you recommended to them?

DR YOUNG:

We've been recommending to a whole lot of major events?

REPORTER:

Specifically to them?

DR YOUNG:

I don't know if it was specific to them but it was certainly to all major events and I've been dealing with the major events area of Government to do that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...really worried about their loved ones, not only their physical health but their mental wellbeing as well.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well the assurance I can give to all of the families of residents here at the Rockhampton Nursing Centre is that we are deploying every single resource you can imagine to keep your family members safe. The entire focus of Queensland health right now is on their wellbeing. All of our concern is their wellbeing and I think you've seen just how rapid our response has been. As the Chief health Officer says, this is the one case, the one active case in Queensland right now that we are concerned about. So all of the apparatus that we put in place to respond to COVID-19 is able to be deployed here to this one case. We're able to allocate that level of resources because we've been so successful. You know, we were putting those resources aside expecting more than a thousand cases a day. The fact that we've had just one in two weeks means we do have massive resources than can be allocated to this nursing centre to keep the residents well, to ensure that the staff are kept safe as well and even to the level of being able to provide iPads to the residents so that their families can call them. That's the level of detail and thinking that has gone into these rapid response plans. We're seeing this both as a really important local response but also a chance for us to test all of those systems so that when we do get cases down the track we can learn from our experience here and do even better.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, the nurse who tested positive have had you had any contact with her because I know there quite a witch hunt on social media to try to figure out who this person is, have you spoken to her? How is she feeling?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I haven't. I don't know her identity. That's a level of detail that is dealt with elsewhere. As we say, the HHS is investigating. There'll be a HR component of that investigation. I'd urge people to be understanding to the extent that this a real person with a real life and real feelings. Clearly a mistake has been made. We will deal with that appropriately but equally, I'm eager to avoid a witch hunt.

REPORTER:

On domestic travel, the New South Wales Government has been quite scathing the past few days. What's your message [inaudible] and what's your message to the New South Wales Government when they're saying "we need to open up the borders"?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well first of all, I don't answer to the New South Wales Government. I and this Government answer to the Queensland people and the decisions we've taken on the advice of the Chief Health Officer have helped to keep Queensland safe. You know, we have an incredible record in responding to COVID-19 that I think all Queenslanders are very proud of and if that means those south of the border have to wait a bit longer before they can visit our beautiful beaches, well we're sorry about that but that's a decision we've made to keep our residents safe and one we will stand by until the health advice changes.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, there's been reports of dentists [inaudible] have been to clinic here in Rockhampton. Can you confirm this or as an example of how we still need more nurses?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm unaware of that and I'll give the Chief Health Officer a chance to respond in a moment but can I assure all Queenslanders is that our staff are very professional. They will only be deployed in environments where they are appropriately trained and registered and I'm sure that's the case at our fever clinic here in Rockhampton. As to what tasks particular clinicians can undertake that's a question better directed to Jeanette.

REPORTER:

Just about Jackie Trad. Do you want her to renominate for the seat of South Brisbane today and have you heard if she will?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I haven't heard anything beyond the early advice which was that she does intend to nominate and does intend to stand and I think she is the best candidate for Labor in South Brisbane.

REPORTER:

Just on [inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I think most Queenslanders who go about their medical business in the normal way – you know they go to the doctor and take a written script away with them would be surprised

to learn that our alternative mechanism uses a fax machine. I think there's lots and lots of younger people who wouldn't even know what a fax machine was and so I think it's entirely appropriate that we are moving to bring that process into the 21st Century by allowing doctors to transfer scripts electronically to pharmacies.

REPORTER:

The LNP's raised some concerns about the transparency around this investigation. How can you ensure that...

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Who's raised that sorry?

REPORTER:

The LNP.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Right. Ok. Well the internal investigation will be undertaken by the HHS but as I've outlined, we will have an independent investigation. The Director-General is finalising the terms of reference and who he will appoint to do that investigation and my undertaking to you, is that the findings of that recommendation will be made public. I think it's incredibly important. I think it's also important that that investigation happen faster than these kinds of investigations would usually take. Often health service investigations can take months because they were investigating an incident that has occurred and while their findings are important in guiding future practice, they're not immediately important. And so this situation is different. If there are systemic findings out of this investigation that mean we need to make changes in process and procedure at our other facilities, we need to know now. We can't wait months and months and so that investigation, I'm eager for it to happen very rapidly.

REPORTER:

Just on sports – the AFL is resuming, and I understand training for the Reds is returning. What are your thoughts or are there any concerns?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

All three codes have worked very closely with the Chief Health Officer's team to put together plans that keep their players safe and keep the public safe. They are very good and strong and rigorous plans and I think they will be effective. I'm very confident they will be effective. I know all Queenslanders are keen to get sport back on the telly, I'm certainly looking forward to that and by working through with the codes in such a detailed way we've been able to do that safely in a way that keeps the players safe of course. Now it's incredibly important that those codes and those players comply with those plans because any breaches with those plans could well lead to them having to be suspended again. Thank you very much. Ah yes dentists.

DR YOUNG:

Sorry, what was the exact question?

REPORTER:

There's been some reports of dentists performing coronavirus tests in fever clinic here. Just wondering if you can confirm this or why there might be [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I suspect they're not actually doing the test. The Nasopharyngeal aspirate. Because that's a highly specialised test that would be done by the pathology staff in most cases so I think I'd need to have the specific details because it doesn't sound right. I mean, if they're involved in the clinic in terms of assessing people that of course is fine. They're a registered health practitioner and that they could do because that's a matter of specific training and they'd be able to take it on and do it but I doubt that they're actually doing the swab test.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - Disclosure

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Deputy Premier Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 20 May 2020

Duration: 27 minutes

E&OE

PREMIER:

We had one new case overnight, and Dr Young will talk about that. It was a woman in her 70s, we've had... we only have 12 active cases in Queensland and over 165,000 tests, and Dr Young will talk a little bit more, but yesterday we had a record testing day, which is also really good news for Queensland as well. So, keep up the good work, and as restrictions continue to ease over the coming weeks and months, we do want Queenslanders to do the right thing. Also too, there's a lot of people who are over 70 who live in Queensland who are very concerned about what they can do. Do they have to remain at home, or can they go out for some short periods of time? And Dr Young will also address that today; I even know my parents continually harass me about this issue, but it is a common issue that is being raised with a lot of my MPs, so Dr Young will address that today as well. But I will hand over to the Deputy Premier, and then of course Dr Young.

DEPUTY PREMIER

Thank you Premier, good morning. That additional case recorded overnight was in the metro north HHS region, the woman had travelled overseas but it was some time ago, and so Jeanette will talk to... the Chief Health Officer will talk to the contract tracing that is now underway. I can report that in Rockhampton we have completed the day four testing of 77 residents there, and all have returned negative. Yesterday I advised the House that there was one employee who was on leave who we had not yet been able to test, we've now tested them and they are also negative. That brings our total active cases to 1058... sorry, our total cases to 1058, 12 of those are active, one recovered in the reporting period and that 12 includes the one new case we are reporting today. We hit a record number of tests in a single day, 4886, and that is a fantastic result for all Queenslanders, but as we keep saying, we want to keep testing even more. And so we are setting a challenge to Queenslanders, can we break that record again? Can we get to 5000 tests in a single day? If you have any symptoms whatsoever do the right for your health, but also help us meet this challenge, help us to get to 500 tests in a day. We have also now extended the Health Emergency Order, that extension is from the 18th of May until the 17th of August, we are extending those in 90-day blocks, as is allowed under the laws that we passed in January. Four of our active cases remain in hospital, but just one of those in ICU with non-invasive ventilation.

DR YOUNG:

One new case confirmed overnight in Queensland. A lady in her 70s who lives in metro north. She returned from India via Singapore two months ago, and has now tested positive after developing some mild respiratory symptoms. At this stage, we're not sure whether that is a persistent case or whether she has acquired it here. We think it most likely that she acquired the case in India, but we'll now have to do a lot of work to work through that; some additional testing and also we'll have to talk to her and look at contact tracing. So, all that work has started. In Rockhampton they've now moved all of the patients – or the residents – in the nursing home into individual rooms with their own access to bathroom, that is very important and we've got infection control in place in the facility. So that is all being worked through. All of the staff in the facility, who were in that facility during the period of concern have now been tested and are all negative for COVID-19, and all the residents have been tested and are negative. But we all know that the incubation period is 14 days, so this will need to continue until that 14 days is up. So that has all been put in place and is being managed. Now there are quite a few things that are very, very important to Queensland. I believe one of the things that has protected Queenslanders the most, as we've been managing our response to COVID-19, is the closure of the international border and the requirement that anyone coming from overseas goes into 14 days quarantine, that has been absolutely critical. Then when we started to see increased cases coming across the border from, in the main, New South Wales and Victoria, closing our border to those two states was incredibly important. We have not seen, since that decision was made, any further cases here in Queensland due to people from New South Wales or Victoria coming into Queensland, which is good, but we need to hold firm and we need to manage our domestic borders very, very carefully. I know, I see the exemption requests every single day from people who live in other states who want to come to Queensland, and whenever there are compassionate reasons – a relative is dying or there's an awful situation – of course I grant those exemptions and people come and they've been very good at quarantining here in Queensland. We need to remain firm and make sure that we manage our borders as we go forward, because Queenslanders have done a fantastic job. To see yesterday over 4800 Queenslanders get tested, and to find one case out of that is extremely reassuring. But I do ask every single Queenslanders to continue to do that. If you develop any symptoms, or even if you're not sure, if you wake up and think, 'oh, is that a symptom or isn't it?', just come forward and get tested. We have a fantastic pathology service here in Queensland, both in the public and the private sector and we have the capacity to test over 10,000 per day, every single day. So, please use that capacity, that is what will keep all of us safe as we go forward. Because we are all going to have to learn to live with COVID-19, and that's important. We must open up our economy to the fullest extent possible as we go forward, but we can only do that if we manage the cases that we have, and we can only manage them if we know about them, that is very important. Now for our older citizens here in Queensland, they have done a fantastic job, but they have really worn the brunt of this, they have been isolated and that is not good. We need to slowly but carefully have people come out and mingle in society, but carefully. So, wherever possible, people should maintain that 1.5 metre distance, that will keep you safe, and of course, get tested if you have any symptoms. But this is a time for people to start engaging with other people, but in a very, very safe manner. So, I encourage all of our population to think about how they can safely go out and visit friends and family, that is really, really important. But again, to do it in a safe manner. So, if you go somewhere, if you want to go to your favourite shop maybe give them a call and ask them how busy they are. If

you want to go to your favourite restaurant, give them a call, talk to them, when aren't they busy, and could you have a special table? Because all our restaurants now are social distancing, so 10 people in a large restaurant is not a lot of people, that is not a risk. So, ring and talk to them so we know that because our older citizens have been here for much longer, they have all these favourite haunts. So think about which ones would be safe and go out and talk to people and start engaging, but do it in a safe manner. And as I have repeated many times, any symptoms, please immediately and that is the time to stay at home.

REPORTER:

On Monday, you said you want two incubation periods with zero cases before you would consider opening the border. Can you explain that because you've said that we're still going to get cases – we're still going to get cases in New South Wales – so is this threshold realistic if we have to have a month with zero cases before you'll recommend the border being opened?

DR YOUNG:

Remember that a case is not a case. So, someone who has acquired the infection overseas and then has come into Australia, I don't regard that as a problem. We know about those cases. We've got quarantine in place and even this case overnight, we'll work through whether that was locally acquired or whether it was acquired overseas. So, a case being acquired overseas is not a problem, because Australians - and indeed Queenslanders - this is a time to come home. So, they're not a problem. It's when you start having cases that you don't know where they've come from. Now, they're a problem, because that means you've got community spread. And we're seeing, as late as this morning, that four nursing homes have had to go into lockdown in Victoria because they've got cases, and they're not sure where all of those cases have come from. That's what the concern is. It's about cases that we don't know where they have come from, because we do know with this disease that the vast majority of people - probably 90 per cent, even higher - have very, very mild disease and, indeed, a significant proportion - we're not sure, of course at this stage - have no symptoms at all. It's a bit like the canary in the coalmine. One case that we find, and we don't know where it's come from, there could have been a whole lot of other cases out there with no symptoms or with very mild symptoms. That's why I keep on saying if you've got any symptoms, please come and get tested because that is the tip of the iceberg potentially.

REPORTER:

Can you just clarify then, what you're thinking in your head about the border closures? What are you looking for? Zero community transmission cases for a month – that's the threshold?

DR YOUNG:

That's the time - that would be the safest way to do it, but we've just got to keep on reviewing things, keep on assessing, keep on thinking where we are. Because the things that are going to protect Queensland is our testing capacity. This is a really new way of managing a pandemic. So I was here in 2009 managing the swine flu pandemic, and that was totally different. We did not have the testing capacity back then. We did not have the ability to quarantine. Our borders remained open. There were so many different variables. We've got

totally different levers to protect Queensland today, and that's a very, very good thing, because this is a very different pandemic to a flu pandemic. We know the mortality is higher. We know the consequences are worse. So it's a good thing we've got all these extra levers. But there are a couple of things that will protect Queensland. The first is the testing capacity. The second is our ability to contact trace. We have got enormous resources in this state to contact trace. And please, could everyone download that COVIDSafe app. Because that's another tool that we now have, that technology has given us, that we didn't have back in 2009, and we need to use it. But it will only be effective if the vast majority of people download it. It will help. Every single person who downloads it helps, but it will be most effective if the majority of people do it.

REPORTER:

Two incubation period is the best case scenario but that's not all that you're taking into consideration?

DR YOUNG:

No, there are a lot of factors we'll take into consideration. That's correct.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, the roadmap says July 10 for the potential resumption interstate travel...

PREMIER:

After review. It says very clearly

REPORTER:

...after review. And the Premier said September on Monday...

PREMIER:

No, no, I said each month. I said very clearly each month we'll be reviewing Sarah. Don't please put incorrect words in my mouth.

REPORTER:

Would you mind [inaudible] the September date. You said "more positive around September"?

PREMIER:

Yeah, because we're reviewing it each month.

REPORTER:

Can I just ask Dr Young, could you explain the health advice that goes into either July or September? The tourism industry as you heard yesterday is very concerned about having as much as possible a set date so they don't miss out on that winter tourism season from interstate travellers so people can have some certainty about whether they might be able to come to Queensland for holidays?



DR YOUNG:

I would love to give everyone certainty. I'd love to have it myself but we can't. This is a day by day development. So every single morning I get up, first thing in the morning, and the first thing I look at is I look at how many cases we had overnight. That could rapidly change because we're testing – and there was that challenge today, I want 5000 Queenslanders to get tested today, that is what will help us – but this could change. You all saw what happened with one case last week that was confirmed in Rockhampton. The enormous amount of work, the response that needed to happen. We can do that and we are going to do it to every single case. But to even suggest that I know what may or may not be in place in July that would be extremely foolish of me to suggest that. The... what I have said publicly is the earliest... the very, very earliest – and only if everything went absolutely perfectly – we might be able to think about opening up our borders in July. That's what the roadmap says but that's after another two points of review. And that's after a whole lot of other work. I actually, of course completely agree with the Premier, that September is a far more realistic one. So if the tourist industry wants a realistic scenario then they should be preparing for September. But I say to them that if everything went perfectly and it was possible that maybe it could happen earlier, wouldn't they also want to be prepared for that. But if they want to have a more realistic scenario, September is a far, far more realistic date for this to occur. Having said that, I can't even commit that September will be possible. It depends what happens between now and then. And it actually depends on every single Queenslander because you have followed the most onerous restrictions possible. You have done such a fantastic job. You have stayed in your homes. You have minimised gatherings to two people and that's what's got us to where we are. We've only just lifted those restrictions. We are not going to have to see what happens. If there are cases out there that we haven't picked up now they'll start to spread. And we know early on in this pandemic we were doubling our cases numbers every three days. From my point of view it was terrifying. When we saw that curve going up it was just going straight up. It was no different to what was happening in New York or Spain or London or Sweden. Look at what's happening in Sweden today. They have more deaths per head of population due to COVID-19 than those other countries of Europe because they decided that for their population it would be best to keep their economy fully open. So, there are so many unknowns here. We just have to be so careful to not undo that fantastic work that's already been done.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, how hard has it been to listening to and being bullied by the southern states?

DR YOUNG:

I've not been bullied by anyone. I've been extremely fortunate and I've had an enormous amount of response here from my colleagues when I've said to them, we have to do this differently. We are a very collegiate group. We get together everyday and we talk though and I'm just glad I'm the Chief Health Officer here in Queensland. You've got to understand, this is all related to the number of people that travelled to overseas into Australia prior to us putting those restrictions at the border. We had fewer numbers coming to Queensland. New South Wales had double the numbers that we had because of their state and population and their people who visited overseas so they had a much, much harder job than Queensland.

They have now got on top most of those cases. We've seen them methodically go down every single case and manage them.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Off course it's possible to do that. Very early on though here in Australia, we put out a directive to all our clinicians that they needed to test any case of pneumonia for Covid-19 because it's another care in there in the coal mine. That's how China initially found their cluster of cases by having a serious of their residents who had pneumonia of an unknown cause. In Australia, we've done the same from very, very on, as soon as we had the capacity to test and we've not found cases.

PREMIER:

I've got Parliament so a couple of more questions.

REPORTER:

What do you say to all those tourism operators on the Gold Coast who rely on the southern people, do they [inaudible].

PREMIER:

Well, we have to protect the Queenslanders and they are all Queenslanders as well and their health is my number one priority. You've heard from Dr Young, we will review at the end of each month but even look at the Australian Government's roadmap, the next two months, they have not talked about interstate travel. So let's be very clear, no, it's not a priority.

REPORTER:

Why is that?

PREMIER:

It's not a priority.

REPORTER:

But why was it introduced as part of the Bill?

PREMIER:

Well it's been misinterpreted, so it's not a priority.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

No, no, we've made the decision.



REPORTER:

Who misinterpreted it?

PREMIER:

No, well the Department put it up as a proposal and it sounded fair in light of the COVID situation. But we've taken the decision not to go ahead with it.

REPORTER:

Did it go through Cabinet?

PREMIER:

Yes, it did.

REPORTER:

Why wasn't it killed off then?

PREMIER:

Because Cabinet was considering a whole range of issues, Lane. There was a whole lot of issues there. And it was about making sure that people being released did not spend additional time in communities before going back to their communities. It's not a priority. It's been in legislation since 2006.

REPORTER:

Are you afraid that you'd look soft on crime?

PREMIER:

No, we just decided it wasn't a priority, okay. Any other questions?

REPORTER:

What would you say to your southern counterparts, obviously...

PREMIER:

We love you, but you can come a bit later.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] obviously this is a decision you can make.

PREMIER:

I make the decision based on the advice of Dr Young. So as we said very clearly, as you heard from Dr Young firsthand, we will review it at the end of each month. And let's be very clear, we've only just opened cafes to 10 people. I mean, we've only just allowed our restrictions to ease. This is... we have to make measured and responsible steps as we open our economy, recognising the health implications.

REPORTER:

But could this be the death knell of tourism in Queensland?

PREMIER:

Tourism will always survive here in Queensland. I mean, we have a robust industry. They are really hurting at the moment, I understand that, but I want to see Queenslanders supporting Queenslanders. And I mean, in our roadmap, it says very clearly there in July, everything going well, fingers crossed, that Queenslanders will be able to move right throughout Queensland. Also, too, the measures we have taken also means that we have been able to allow some further easing of restrictions ahead of our southern counterpart states. So, you know, I mean, unfortunately New South Wales and Victoria have that community transmission and they have to get that under control before we allow visitors to come here. And I'm sorry for that, I am so sorry for that, and you know what? When we all get through this together, I'll be the number one supporter going down there and urging people to come here...

REPORTER:

[inaudible] suggested today that there could be legal issues, that legal action could be taken against the Government for doing this.

PREMIER:

But we've allowed freight to come through and of course Dr Young allows compassionate reasons as well. And I'm not the only state. Let's be very clear here. Western Australia has a hard border closure, Northern Territory has a border closure, South Australia has a border closure, and Tasmania has a border closure. This is not unique to Queensland, folks. Let's be very clear, I will always put Queenslanders first. Okay, that's my job – to put Queenslanders first.

REPORTER:

Premier, [inaudible] hotel rooms [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes, we still have that provision available.

REPORTER:

Premier, on public transport, the New South Wales Government a few days ago announced a public transport plan that puts limits on buses and trains of people numbers, are you doing the same? Because the Minister seemed to suggest it was a day by day proposition, there was no plan like New South Wales.

PREMIER:

Yeah, no, we do have a... Minister Bailey will be having more to say about that next week. And of course it's really important that people, you know, if they're using public transport to observe some social distancing. It's more of an issue again in New South Wales because of community transmission and the large volumes of people that utilise public transport, but



Transcript

here in Queensland the advice still is nationally to avoid public transport during peak times if you don't socially distance.

REPORTER:

Are you saying we could have caps on the number of people on trains or buses?

PREMIER:

No, we won't have that situation. We don't have to have that situation here, but we will have further advice to commuters. Okay, that's the bells everyone. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Program: Press Conference:

Speaker/s: Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier

Steven Miles, Deputy Premier and Health Minister

Dr Jeanette Young, Chief Health Officer

Mark Bailey, Minister for Transport

Date: 21 May 2020

Duration: 13mins 52sec

E&OE

PREMIER:

Ok, Well good morning everyone and in further good news for Queensland, zero overnight cases and 12 active cases still in Queensland. I want to thank Queenslanders for the incredible job that they are doing in really smashing that curve. Of course, our schools are getting prepared for next week when everyone goes back to school on Monday, and I want to thank all the principals and the schools community for working together and we hope a safe return for all of our school students right across Queensland. Look, secondly, we also know that the June school holidays will be coming up very shortly and, of course, with our roadmap, it means that Queenslanders can travel up to 250 kilometres and they can holiday in Queensland in their regional areas. So, I really want to encourage everyone as much as possible to start planning those holidays and really back out tourism industry. And a lot of people have been saying to me, can we actually travel in our school holidays? Absolutely, you can do those regional trips. I think it's going to be wonderful for all of us, Queenslanders backing Queenslanders to go out and support our tourism sector as much as possible. With those few words, I'll hand over to the Deputy Premier and then we'll have Dr Young and then the Transport Minister is here to talk about public transport. Thank you.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Zero new cases for Queensland today means that our plan to ease restrictions is working. We are gradually easing restrictions without seeing a substantial increase in cases, which is precisely what we want to do. It was - it is an endorsement of our approach. That means our total number of cases remains 1058. 12 of those are active. Just four in hospital and one is on non-invasive ventilation. We tested 2889 patients yesterday. That is less than what we had hoped so the message continues to be, everyone in Queensland, if for any reason you think there is a chance you might have COVID-19, any symptoms at all, please go and get tested.

DR YOUNG:

So, no new cases confirmed overnight in Queensland, which is excellent news. But, please, could everyone remember, if you're unwell with any symptoms at all, to either go and see

your GP or attend a fever clinic and get tested. By doing that, we can all protect each other and make sure that we can continue to open up our economy, open up our communities, and move towards a more normal life. Thank you.

MINISTER BAILEY:

Another positive day in terms of the trend in Queensland. What we're seeing is a much lower risk of infection in our state, and that includes on our public transport system. We're seeing a very slow return of commuters to our system, which is good to see. And let's be very clear, on the border issue we won't be lectured to by the worst performing state in Australia. There are 33 times the number of active cases in New South Wales compared to Queensland. So, New South Wales needs to get its act together and get its community transmission down and we'll all be better off throughout this nation, including in Queensland. It's time for Gladys and the New South Wales Government to get their act together and to start performing as well as Queensland has done on the health front. We've got provisions in place from the very beginning on our public transport system to minimise risks such as rear-door boarding, cashless ticketing and ensuring that people are well aware of how to socially distance. And those communications will increase in coming days.

REPORTER:

Premier, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer said yesterday that there was no medical advice to keep borders closed. Why is Queensland different?

PREMIER:

Yeah, well, I'll listen to my Chief Health Officer, which is Dr Young, and perhaps Dr Young might like to comment on that?

DR YOUNG:

So, there is plenty of health advice about the importance of minimising the number of cases coming in to a community. We saw how effective that was for Australia when the international borders were closed. And then as we started to see in Queensland, the number of cases acquired interstate and then coming into Queensland, we immediately acted here, the Premier took that advice to act, and close the borders to other states. And, most of the states in our country also did that. So we saw Western Australia, we saw South Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania and Queensland close their borders to those states that had significantly higher numbers of cases and local transmission. So, there is a lot of health advice about the importance of minimising the number of cases coming in to a community.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]....two sets of medical advice at the moment?

DR YOUNG:

No, there isn't. There is one set. AHPPC, the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee gets together most days. We were getting together every single day until recently, now it is most days we talk it through. I will at the next opportunity, which is today's meeting, talk to my colleagues about their plans around the country. I spoke to the West

Australian Chief Health Officer as late as yesterday to talk about their plans. So each state will do what is best for their state. And today, here in Queensland, it is best for us that we continue to minimise movement across our domestic borders. So, of course, we're allowing people to come into Queensland for compassionate reasons and, of course, to move freight. And there are a number of other areas. But this is not the time for tourists to travel into Queensland. Because one case can cause an enormous setback to our plan to open up our communities.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...subject to review... now it is interstate travel probably September...[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Nothing's changed. We were always going to review that travel arrangement at the end of each month. That was made very, very clear. We've got two review points before we get to July. Then we'll continue to review after then and it just depends what happens. We're still seeing cases in New South Wales and Victoria. So, most days now, we're having zero or maybe one case in Queensland. And similarly for most of the other states. That's not yet the case in New South Wales and Victoria. And they have started to open up their communities. And they have got more cases. So they have a higher risk. So we will just need to continue to review at the end of each month where we're at.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, at this stage the COVIDSafe app hasn't been useful to us but then we've not had many cases. And the cases we've had have been mainly in quarantine or shortly thereafter. So we've not found it of use at this stage but we know going forward it will be of significant use because people are going to be out and about and mingling with more people so it's really important that every Queenslanders download the app.

REPORTER:

Premier, have you seen today Pauline Hansen, sorry this is for the Premier, sorry Dr Young, Pauline Hansen has said that she has a lawyer all ready to go, to challenge the constitutional validity of a restrictions on the border. What do you think of that?

PREMIER:

Oh well, if she wants to do that, that's entirely up to her but by the time any action got to the High Court, I'm sure the borders will be quite open. Let me be very clear, we are reviewing this every month. Nothing has changed, we are reviewing it every month. We are not going to be lectured to by a state that has the highest number of cases in Australia.

REPORTER:

You said yesterday that tourism will survive in this state. Isn't it true that some businesses won't? That they are depended on this winter period, to get off their feet and stay alive.



PREMIER:

Unfortunately, we've got COVID here and it's very prevalent in New South Wales and Victoria. So, what I want to see in June for those School holidays and that period just before the school holidays is Queenslanders really getting out there and supporting our tourism industry. You know, a lot of Queenslanders used to travel overseas before, now is their opportunity to back Queenslanders and back the businesses and tourism operators.

REPORTER:

By saying that you are reviewing it at the end of each month, does that mean, it might be possible that we open our borders before September?

PREMIER:

Yes, exactly. That is what we've been saying but we have to look at those two states, New South Wales and Victoria, to see the level of community transmission. That's what Dr Young's advice is. Unfortunately, they have 401 in New South Wales active cases at the moment. We've just seen a school close in New South Wales. There's a changing situation in New South Wales and we just don't want to put Queenslanders at risk at this stage.

REPORTER:

You said yesterday that we might be going beyond September?

PREMIER:

No I said very clearly that we are going to review this at the end of each month, very clear, very clear. But now is the time and I know that Minister Jones is working on a Queenslanders backing Queenslanders tourist campaign to make sure that people are backing our sector here and taking those holidays and a lot of people wanting to know, can they book a holiday in the school holidays in their local region and the answer is yes, please. Let's support our tourism operators during this time.

REPORTER:

What kind of feedback are you getting from the general community? Do they understand the need for the borders to stay closed?

PREMIER:

Well Alison, that's a really good question. I hope they understand these are really tough decisions. No-one makes these decisions lightly. In a perfect world, in a pre-COVID world, everything will be back to normal but we have COVID here at the moment and look how well the Queenslanders are going. We had zero cases overnight. We are seeing more zero cases in the last couple of weeks than we had in months. Why would we put all that at risk? I mean, we don't want to go backwards, we want to go forward. Also too, that fact that we have those low numbers means that we can open up our restrictions faster than other states. Our restrictions have eased in Queensland ahead of New South Wales and Victoria because we don't have those high rates of community transmission. I hope they get their community transmission under control because that means we will be able to open up sooner. You know really, you should be asking those Premier's these questions.



REPORTER:

Premier will you still be making your position or the Government's position on voluntary assisted dying by the end of the week?

PREMIER:

Yes....Yes...very shortly.

REPORTER:

Is that likely to be introduced to Parliament before the October election?

PREMIER:

You will hear about that very shortly Sonia in Parliament.

REPORTER:

Premier....

PREMIER:

Yes Leah.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] laws, the government pulled them off the agenda after a few journalists asked questions about it. How confident can we be that you won't back down on borders because you're being attacked by the New South Wales Premier to reopen....

PREMIER:

I will always take the health advice. We have I believe the best health officer here in the nation, Dr Young and I will always take her advice. Alright last two.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Pardon.....It's not happening. I said that. Claire.

REPORTER:

Premier, appreciate that there may be some confusion when we have the Deputy Health Officer saying that borders should be opened.

PREMIER:

Look, the advice in National Cabinet was that it was up to each individual state. It was very clear, ok. Thank you. Sorry Transport Minister. Ok, I'm going to have to go so just quickly.

REPORTER:



The Deloitte report out today saying that construction is going to take the biggest hit in the next few months, productivity down 15%, quarter of jobs in transport and storage sector will eventually disappear and not back to normal for six years. What's the Government doing about it?

MINISTER BAILEY:

Well, our transport infrastructure program is actually ahead of schedule so it's been very minimally affected by the coronavirus. There's been safety measure in place in our transport infrastructure projects but with the reduced traffic volumes, there's been some gains there in terms of being able to do things quicker. So our investment, we've had four record investments in infrastructure out of five budgets, we've just added \$400 millions in stimulus package yesterday, so we'll see more and more happening in terms of transport infrastructure. Happy to look at that report but it sounds like it's a very broad report that hasn't really taken Queensland specifically into account. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI 43083

Program: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier

Steven Miles, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health

Dr Jeanette Young, Chief Health Officer

Date: 27 May 2020

Duration: 17mins 20sec

E&OE

PREMIER:

We have an unfolding situation at the moment. Last night there has been one confirmed case in Queensland and the gentleman is deceased. So we now have seven deaths and I want to say to the family of the deceased person, we extend our deepest condolences to your family and friends. The man is from Blackwater in central Queensland. He's a 30-year-old man and the coroner is investigating the death. He was showing symptoms prior to his death but also had other illnesses that Dr Young will talk about. He positive at the post-mortem and his partner is now sick with symptoms. And she has been transferred to the Rockhampton Hospital where she's being isolated and further tests are being done.

Blackwater has never had a case of COVID before. Contact tracing is extensively underway. The police and ambulance officers who attended the scene are also now in quarantine. And Dr Young can also provide further details and measures being undertaken in Blackwater. If anyone is sick in Queensland, please stay home. Do not go to work. But also too, if you're showing any symptoms I urge you to go and get tested. There will be fever clinics set up at Blackwater and also at Emerald and if anyone has any flu-like symptoms, we urge you in these two communities to please go and get tested. So, once again, we extend our condolences and it's a timely reminder for all Queenslanders that this COVID is real, it's out there, and it has impacts on Queenslanders and in this case, we have lost another Queenslanders today. So, I hand over to the Deputy Premier and then Dr Young and we're happy to take questions.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank you, Premier. The news today is absolutely tragic and while we are working to finalise all of the facts, we're sharing with you today what we know. Late yesterday afternoon, the Queensland Ambulance Service was called to a home in Blackwater. There they found a man who was deceased, he was later tested for COVID-19 and that test was positive. The paramedics and police officers who attended the scene are now in quarantine and we thank them for the assistance they provided to this man and his partner. Of course, our thoughts are with a Queensland family that today will be grieving. This does appear to be Queensland's seventh COVID-19 related death. We have deployed a public health expert and additional contact tracing resources from Brisbane to Blackwater today. The case will now be referred

to the coroner and we expect a post-mortem will be conducted. We have set up additional fever clinics that will be ready and operational in Emerald and in Blackwater shortly and we urge anyone, anyone in Queensland, but particularly anyone in Blackwater, who is suffering symptoms to please go and get tested. This message is particularly important for all the blokes out there. I know that men sometimes fob off their illnesses, they don't go and get medical assistance, but it's incredibly important right now that anyone with symptoms goes and gets tested. It appears that this gentleman who has passed away was ill for some time and did not get tested. And so I want anyone, anyone in Queensland, who is unwell, to go and get tested today. Especially if they're from Blackwater or been in Blackwater.

This new additional case brings Queensland's total to 1058. Seven deaths tragically. We now have seven active cases, five further are now considered to have recovered. We have four patients in hospital with COVID-19, one of them is in intensive care and being ventilated. In the last testing period we tested 3592. That is a pretty good daily testing level, but we would really hope, we would really hope to see more people going and getting tested, particularly off the back of this news today.

DR YOUNG:

So, this is clearly sad news overnight that we've had a seventh related COVID-19 death in Queensland. There is more work we need to do to look at this gentleman and look at his history and of course his death has been referred to the coroner. So, we received that result at 11:00pm last night, so we do need to confirm it. But the suspicion is that he has died with the infection. He has a complicated medical history and that also needs to be worked through. But every death due to COVID-19 is of course a tragedy for the family and I pass on my condolences to his partner and his family at this difficult time for them. So, it is really important that anyone in Blackwater today who has any symptoms at all come forward to the fever clinic has being set up. It will be in place from 12 midday, so if people could come forward and get tested, that is very important. And also across all of Queensland - if anyone has any symptoms, or a fever, or a history of a fever, it's important that you come forward and be tested as soon as you develop those symptoms or fever. So that we cannot only look after you, but your family, and also the community, because then we can go and contact trace people you have been in contact with, both to find out where you acquired it, but also whether or not you have passed it on to other people. Because we know that you can pass on the infection up to 48 hours prior to developing symptoms. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Do we know [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, we believe that he was at home for most of that time. And we believe he's had symptoms for several weeks. But that is the information that needs to be confirmed today. We really only found this out very late last night so we need to go into all those details.

REPORTER:

What about his partner? [inaudible]



DR YOUNG:

Yes, she does. So they're all the things we're working through with her. We need to test her again. Her first test that was done late last night was negative, but we do need to test her again. So she's currently in isolation.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

We don't believe that he had been overseas, no.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, we don't believe he had travelled outside of Blackwater since around February. But they're the things we all.....we do need to thoroughly investigate all of those. They're very important.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I don't have that specific information for Blackwater but today I ask that everyone in Blackwater, if you have any symptom at all, to come forward and be tested.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, that's all.....I do know he has got a complicated medical history and that's being investigated. And remember, this is now a case for the coroner. So the coroner will be obtaining all his medical records and working through all that information.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, he was at home, he wasn't working at the time.

REPORTER:

Had he sought any medical treatment at all prior to the Ambulance being called last night?

DR YOUNG:

We're not aware of that, we believe not. But that's also again part of that investigation that's happening.

REPORTER:

What does this say? This is our youngest case, presumably from somebody who had been overseas or interstate. What does that say about the state of the virus?

DR YOUNG:

It means we have to be alert. As every Queenslanders has been. It is really, really important. Although we know that the majority of people who develop complications and off course all of the people to date in Queensland who have died have been over, older people, but know from overseas that it's not a disease exclusively of older people.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we know that unfortunately his partner came home from work at around 4:30 and found him non-responsive, called an ambulance, and they declared him dead.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I'm concerned by it, of course I am. But it's really, really important that we're all alert. I'm confident that we have really good systems in place and that Queenslanders understand today what they need to do. They need to maintain social distancing, that's really important. They need to wash their hands. And most importantly of all, if they're sick, to stay at home and get tested. So if we all do those things, I know that we can manage this together.

REPORTER:

Has there been any confirmed cases in Blackwater prior to this?

DR YOUNG:

No.

REPORTER:

Obviously that means there are people who have or have had dealings with [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

That's the work we need to do. Who he's had contact with. So that's all happening as we speak. But no, we've not had any confirmed cases in Blackwater prior to this case.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

I have four planes on the ground, two in Townsville, and two in Brisbane, that we can use to go and get anyone who is a confirmed case and move them to Rockhampton or to Brisbane. That's been part of our planning from day one. So we can move people. We know that for the vast majority of people, they have a reasonably mild disease for the first five or six days, and that's when they deteriorate. So that's why I've been saying it's so important if you have any symptoms, that you get tested immediately. Because then we can work out what the trajectory of your disease might be and we can manage that to the best capacity of that area.

REPORTER:

Premier, there had been a growing hope over the last 24 hours that intrastate travel may be opened up for everybody sooner. What does this do to that plan?

PREMIER:

Look, I think we have to of course always listen to the health advice but on the positive side, we now only have seven active cases. We need to make sure we clarify this, but let's also remember people have been staying in their regions. So the contact tracing makes it a lot easier because people have not been travelling outside the regions.

REPORTER:

Is there any suggestion that you might lock down Blackwater?

PREMIER:

Sorry?

REPORTER:

Is there any suggestion that you might lock down Blackwater?

PREMIER:

No. Not at this stage. So once again, we urge anyone in Blackwater, if you have any symptoms, please get tested today. So people will be on the ground and it's very important that the community listens to Dr Young.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

PREMIER:

We have to make decisions by Sunday and we'll be taking into advice all of the health expert advice from Dr Young. So very crucial over the next few days to really do this contact tracing around this issue.

REPORTER:

Was this person a miner and are you aware if he's been working?

PREMIER:

My understanding is that he has not been working since November last year. That's my understanding.

REPORTER:

Are we doing enough to test people in regional Queensland compared to the South East Queensland?

PREMIER:

We are, but once again, here, we need to make sure that people with any flu-like symptoms are coming forward and getting tested.

REPORTER:

Premier, do you have an update on the previous case that may or may not have been related to the Ruby Princess yesterday?

PREMIER:

My understanding was the person was a passenger on the Ruby Princess.

REPORTER:

Is that a case that's been officially linked to that...

PREMIER:

I might get Dr Young to address that one. Is that alright Dr Young?

DR YOUNG:

We're just confirming the situation with that particular individual. We know that people can shed virus for quite a long time. But it's usually not ineffective. It's dead virus particles. That's the PCR test. We just need to work through and get some other results before we can definitively say the case.

REPORTER:

Given that, is it possible that the case in Cairns is indeed linked to Ruby Princess, it could be community transmitted?

PREMIER:

I think it's unlikely. We have not seen cases in Cairns for a while. I think it's very unlikely. I think it's far more likely, given the large number of cases that we have seen on the Ruby Princess, that that's where it was acquired.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, does that show – we had the woman who came from India a month earlier then tested positive, this one from the Ruby Princess, the case at the aged care facility that seemed to infect no other people and now this gentleman at Blackwater, does all this show just how little we know about the disease itself and how spreads?

DR YOUNG:

Oh, of course. Yes, we have always said this. This is a brand new disease. The world didn't know anything about it till late December, early January. And we're still learning every single day. Which is why we have to be very, very cautious in how we respond to it. And make sure that we protect people from it.

REPORTER:

It's quite possible then that this Blackwater case may be containing [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

It could be. We just need to test everyone who has any symptom in Blackwater so we can be sure that is the case. That's really, really important. And that's part of our response for this disease. If we continue doing that every single time we get a case, we'll be able to remove more and more of the restrictions that have had to be put in place.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, is this the youngest death of someone in Australia with coronavirus and how unusual is it for a 30 year old to die from that disease?

DR YOUNG:

It is. But unfortunately, we do see young people die from respiratory diseases all the time. We know that. We see it every winter with flu, that we see younger people die. So people... age is not a total predictor of people who are going to do badly. The other thing is we don't know the impact of the other medical issues he had. That will be something for the coroner to look at. But whether or not COVID-19 was the precipitating cause for his death, that's how we report it, and no matter what, we need to now go and contact trace and anyone who lives in Blackwater really, they must come forward and get tested if they have symptoms.

REPORTER:

So it's quite possible that even though he was positive he didn't die from COVID-19?

DR YOUNG:

That's possible. But you then get into semantics about what was the trigger and what was the cause. So any person who dies, who is infected with COVID-19, we declare it as a COVID-19 related death.

REPORTER:

Did he have a [inaudible] illness other than COVID-19?

DR YOUNG:

No. No.

REPORTER:

Did the couple have the app at all?



DR YOUNG:

I don't know that yet.

REPORTER:

Premier, [inaudible] this news at 11 o'clock last night, what was going on [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

No, I was notified first thing this morning. Very early this morning.

REPORTER:

Do you fear for Queensland?

PREMIER:

Look, I just think at the moment, like Dr Young said, Queenslanders are doing the right thing. They're making sure that they're socially distanced, they're practising their hygiene. As Dr Young said, we all have to be alert. We have to be really alert that this can flare up and if you have symptoms, you need to get tested. Because it's that enormous contact tracing that happens with just one case. So it's not just contacting one or two people, it's everyone that person's had close contact with.

REPORTER:

Do we know what his partner did for a job? Did she work at a shop?

PREMIER:

I understand she worked in a shop. But they're doing all that contact tracing at the moment. Alright, thanks everyone.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 28 May 2020

Duration: 20 minutes approx.

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No new cases of COVID-19 overnight meaning that our total number of cases since January is now and remains 1058. Just six of those remain active meaning one further case is now considered to have recovered. Of those six, four remain in hospital, one of them in intensive care on ventilation. We tested 3,618 yesterday, bringing our total number of Queenslanders tested to 174,623. Our contact tracers on the ground in Blackwater have identified 20 contacts of that man, who sadly died. 18 of those have been tested and their tests have returned negative. There are two further who will be tested today. 31 Blackwater locals were tested at Blackwater Hospital yesterday. All of those that have returned have returned negative results. 95 people are booked to be tested today. We are opening a third fever clinic at the Blackwater Rodeo Grounds. We have a capacity to test more than 400 now there in Blackwater. Since 1 May, we've had now 16 positive cases, so that's since the start of the month, 16 positive cases. We know of only two to be certain to be locally acquired, and four are under investigation, underlining just how low our positive numbers are, and just how few of them are locally acquired. And finally, let me say that this will be the first night in some time that I will be focused on numbers other than Queensland COVID testing data – that is, of course, by how many points the Broncos can beat the Eels. I'd like to see it be 58, but I'd settle for two.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you, Deputy Premier. So very good news for Queensland. No new cases of COVID-19 overnight. But, having said that, for us to go forward and to lift those very onerous restrictions that have been in place now, we must do more testing. We have the capacity in Queensland to test 10,000 Queenslanders every single day. We have not even reached half of that number, so I implore Queenslanders, if you have any symptoms at all, or a fever of 37.5 degrees Celsius or above, or a history of fever, then please come forward and get tested. There's a number of reasons for that. First, it is vitally important for you. Although we don't have an effective pharmaceutical treatment, or a drug treatment for this virus, we do have really, really good supportive care we can offer here in Queensland. We know of the 15 people who've been admitted to ICU in Queensland, 14 have survived because we have great treatment available. So please, come forward and get tested for your own sake. Come forward and get tested for your family's sake, because we know the most likely transmission is within a household. So if we can test you, we can stop you spreading it to other people in your household. And come forward for your community's sake. Because then, if you have got a



case, we can contact-trace around you and make sure we don't end up with an outbreak. This is really, really important, as we lift restrictions going forward. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, do we [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, we're not. So we've done that contact-tracing, upstream and downstream, and we're trying to get more information to work that through.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yeah. She's in isolation at the moment. She had that initial test and she'll be having a subsequent test, because we know that early on in the illness, you may not have enough virus to be able to pick it up. So we will be doing further testing. But, of course, she'll be in quarantine for 14 days.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Yes. So it was done post-mortem, so after the gentleman had died, and it was contaminated with quite a bit of blood, so therefore it wasn't an effective test. So at this stage, I'm waiting for information from the Coroner, who is now responsible of course, for sorting out what may have killed the gentleman.

REPORTER:

Is it possible that this is a false negative?

DR YOUNG:

No, I don't believe so. There was a test done on a gene expert, which is a very sensitive test, and it came back positive. So I believe it was a positive. We'll be doing other tests, of course, under the Coroner's direction to determine if we can get other information.

REPORTER:

Are you still trying to connect it to the Rockhampton nurse [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. That's one of the investigations that we're pursuing at the moment.

REPORTER:

We know that there's a really high fly-in fly-out workers across those areas, have we established [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So that's all part of that contact tracing. So we sent an expert team into Blackwater to do all that work.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No. That's why – although we do all of that work, and we can do it – the most important thing every single time is don't wait for a phone call that you might be a contact. Get tested. So anyone who has any symptoms, no matter how mild they are – or, indeed, if they think they've got symptoms and they're not sure, because we all know there are times when we might have an itchy throat or a runny nose, get tested. That is really, really important. That is, in fact, more important than the work our contact-tracers are doing, who are all experts, who are committed, who know what they're doing. We also need every Queenslanders to be committed to work through this together.

REPORTER:

Those acquaintance contacts are they all based in Blackwater and do they [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

There were two contact elsewhere, so we're just following up with those at the moment. But most of those contracts were in Blackwater.

REPORTER:

Can you rule out more community transmission?

DR YOUNG:

No, of course I can't rule out more community transmission. That's why I'm asking for anyone with any symptoms could come forward and be tested. That is exceptionally, critically important.

REPORTER:

What else do we know about [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That's now something for the Coroner to go and investigate. So the Coroner has all his medical records and that will all be worked through.

REPORTER:

There was some suggestion from Blackwater yesterday that his partner has not [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

She did have some. That has to all be worked through. Again, it's very difficult early on in the disease, that people can have some very mild symptoms and they're not sure. So the most important thing now is for the next 14 days she will of course, as being a close contact, will be in quarantine, and we'll work with her during that time.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, there's – as some of you have already mentioned – there is a significant fly-in fly-out workforce, so all of that is being investigated as well.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, that's a decision that we need to all make, and there'll be discussions as well at National Cabinet.

REPORTER:

The Premier said earlier she'd be making recommendations to the Federal Government about the Biosecurity Act which the Federal Government [inaudible] is the Biosecurity Act still necessary [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So the Biosecurity Act has been very, very effective here in Queensland, and across Australia, in preventing transmission of COVID-19 into those discrete First Nations communities, so it has been extremely effective. There are other ways we could manage similar controls, so that's the discussion I believe will be happening.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] in those communities because their situation is not easing [inaudible] discriminated against, is there a roadmap for them?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, that's being worked through with them. So of course they're a critical part in terms of developing that road map.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] to let them know when there is something happening?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. They're aware of the road map that's being developed.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] hotel in Brisbane who is applying to see his terminally ill mother [inaudible] he said he's applied for an exemption [inaudible] can you confirm [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. He did a while ago apply for an exemption and although it's a very, very sad situation, we know that we don't have any cases in Hervey Bay whereas, from where he's come, there are a lot of cases. So I did provide the exemption for him to come to Australia, but required him to spend 14 days in quarantine before he could travel up to Hervey Bay. That's correct.

REPORTER:

He's got to wait [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Of course, I'm happy, yes. The minute he's finished that quarantine, of course he's able to travel.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] you said there were two contacts [inaudible] does that imply that he had left Blackwater since February?

DR YOUNG:

No. It doesn't. It implies it that those people visited him in Blackwater.

REPORTER:

The Prime Minister said this morning that there was no national health advice about internal borders and he said that each state has to justify their position. [inaudible] borders, can you justify your position [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

The people who live on the border are able to come into Queensland. So if they work here, if they shop here, if they have health care here, of course they can come in and they have been given exemptions in large numbers. So that's not been an issue. Also, children who come into Queensland to go to boarding school and live near the borders, there's no issue there. So this is about people coming into Queensland for recreational purposes only, away from that border. So people who want to travel up into Queensland for a holiday, and we saw increasing numbers of Queenslanders contracting infections because of travel interstate. So we had to do something at that point, because we were seeing those numbers increase, and that's the information that we're keeping under close review.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, at the moment, that is the standard agreement about when you can say that outbreaks are over. That's two incubation periods.



REPORTER:

[inaudible] explain the situation [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well, I can't go into a great level of detail there. Obviously, I haven't been privy to those conversations. They've been between our public health unit contact tracers and her. But I understand there's been widespread reporting that she did take a trip to Blackwater. My advice via the Chief Health Officer is that the timing of that trip means it's unlikely that she is the source of the infection, but it's possible and so they're continuing to work through that. Obviously, we've had very low numbers of confirmed cases, and very low numbers in the central Queensland region, and so while it might just be a coincidence our public health unit will investigate thoroughly whether this is a possible source of the infection.

REPORTER:

Why would she go there?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well again, according to media reports and the advice I've received, she said that she went there to see either the sunrise or the sunset, that's the advice that she provided to the public health unit at the time. At the time she said that she had no contact with anyone on the ground and so there was no reason for our contact tracers to think that there was any risk associated with that trip.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] partner was aware [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That's my understanding, that in those interviews she said that she had been to Blackwater but that she had had no contact with anyone else there.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] sunrise or a sunset, 400 kilometres, [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Obviously it is a bit curious and that's why those investigators will again talk with her and see if there's any details she can now recall or any further information that she can provide that might assist them.

REPORTER:

She said she'd only been going to visit her son [inaudible], is that true?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I haven't heard that level of detail. We're not aware of that level of detail, we're happy to look into it though.

REPORTER:

You spoke of the timing, does that imply that she wasn't infectious at the time or he was already infectious?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

My understanding is that he had symptoms prior to her travel to Blackwater.

REPORTER:

Did that nurse travel anywhere else?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We know she travelled to Brisbane. That is considered the most likely source of her infection. As to any other travel, I don't have any further information on that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I understand that the Chief Health Officer has asked for sewage testing to be conducted in Blackwater. That will give us a sense of whether this case has been locally acquired and whether there is asymptomatic transmission there in Blackwater. That's a useful tool for our public health officers.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

The University of Queensland started some testing here in Brisbane as a proof of concept and it worked. Now, they are looking at a plan on how they might put it across the state. But at this point in time we know we don't have any significant numbers of cases in Queensland. Although we are not doing as much testing as I would like to see, the testing that they're doing is showing very, very low numbers. The best thing we can continue to do is anyone with symptoms to come forward and get tested. Testing sewerage will give us an idea down the track as to how many cases there might be out there but it's not what I'd like to see at the moment. I think that's a useful additional tool. At the moment the best thing we can all do is get tested if we have got any symptoms.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That's why I've said to Blackwater, if you have got any symptoms or you think you might have symptoms or anything at all, please come forward. Unfortunately, yesterday we saw low

30's. Today, we've had a few more people book in for testing but I would like to see far more people in Blackwater come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, it makes it really difficult because the ones that I want to find are the symptomatic ones because they are more likely to have the infection. If you just went and tested everyone with no symptoms, the vast majority of those people would not have the disease, whereas if you test everyone with symptoms, there's a higher likelihood that some of them will have the disease. That's why I'm saying please, if you got any symptoms or fever or history of fever, come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

No, the partner isn't the case. The partner is currently in quarantine. She has been tested once and she did not have any virus. Where she worked is not a problem.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

In Blackwater. I don't know which home she is in.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Yes, it's easily accessible anywhere in the state. GP's can organise it. Hospitals can organise it. Community clinics, Aboriginal controlled health sector can, anywhere and everywhere in the state can organise for someone to be tested. It's a very simple process.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Police will be managing that. They always have systems in place that they can immediately respond. They have a workforce across the state so there's no concerns to the town for that.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].



DR YOUNG:

Negative.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm not going to get into the details of individual cases. Obviously, just based on what I've seen in the media reports, this is a particular tragic, heart wrenching and no doubt it will be investigated in detail both the child safety response as well as what's happened here and I'll let those processes play out.

REPORTER:

What do you make of Pauline Hansen's to challenge the border closing in the High Court?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, it was only a month ago I think when Pauline Hansen was saying we should have a border in North Queensland. I think she's more desperate to seek headlines than she is concerned about this virus and its impact on Queenslanders. The Queensland Government is putting the interest and the health and the well-being of Queenslanders first and will continue to do so regardless of what Pauline Hansen or her mate say.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier can you tell us about the roadmap for aboriginal communities [inaudible].

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We will continue to have those discussions over today and tomorrow. We have outlined we'll have more to say what stage 2 looks like in Queensland on Sunday and it's possible that we might have updated information on the restrictions as they relate to indigenous communities there. The decision to lock them down was taken after deep consultation with them and their community leaders and of course we will continue to talk with them and listen to them as we make those decisions.

REPORTER:

Would that be a matter for discussion tomorrow at the National Cabinet? The Premier said that she would take this issue to that meeting.


DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm sure that National Cabinet discusses those kinds of things at each of their meetings. Considers all of these things at their meetings but I am not privy to that agenda.

DR YOUNG:

Can I just mention one more thing?

DEPUTY PREMIER:



Yes, go for it.

DR YOUNG:

Today the focus is on Blackwater, tomorrow we will get a case somewhere else in the state and the focus will be there. What I implore all of you because you are absolutely critical. The media of this state is to get out the message, don't wait til you have a case in your town, don't wait til something happens, get tested now. That is critical. All 5.1 million of us in Queensland. If we have any symptoms, please immediately get tested, don't wait for something to happen. That way, we will find the case before we have an outbreak and that way we can make sure that we only have one case, we don't have a cluster of cases. Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DRS

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 28 May 2020

Duration: 20 minutes approx.

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No new cases of COVID-19 overnight meaning that our total number of cases since January is now and remains 1058. Just six of those remain active meaning one further case is now considered to have recovered. Of those six, four remain in hospital, one of them in intensive care on ventilation. We tested 3,618 yesterday, bringing our total number of Queenslanders tested to 174,623. Our contact tracers on the ground in Blackwater have identified 20 contacts of that man, who sadly died. 18 of those have been tested and their tests have returned negative. There are two further who will be tested today. 31 Blackwater locals were tested at Blackwater Hospital yesterday. All of those that have returned have returned negative results. 95 people are booked to be tested today. We are opening a third fever clinic at the Blackwater Rodeo Grounds. We have a capacity to test more than 400 now there in Blackwater. Since 1 May, we've had now 16 positive cases, so that's since the start of the month, 16 positive cases. We know of only two to be certain to be locally acquired, and four are under investigation, underlining just how low our positive numbers are, and just how few of them are locally acquired. And finally, let me say that this will be the first night in some time that I will be focused on numbers other than Queensland COVID testing data – that is, of course, by how many points the Broncos can beat the Eels. I'd like to see it be 58, but I'd settle for two.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you, Deputy Premier. So very good news for Queensland. No new cases of COVID-19 overnight. But, having said that, for us to go forward and to lift those very onerous restrictions that have been in place now, we must do more testing. We have the capacity in Queensland to test 10,000 Queenslanders every single day. We have not even reached half of that number, so I implore Queenslanders, if you have any symptoms at all, or a fever of 37.5 degrees Celsius or above, or a history of fever, then please come forward and get tested. There's a number of reasons for that. First, it is vitally important for you. Although we don't have an effective pharmaceutical treatment, or a drug treatment for this virus, we do have really, really good supportive care we can offer here in Queensland. We know of the 15 people who've been admitted to ICU in Queensland, 14 have survived because we have great treatment available. So please, come forward and get tested for your own sake. Come forward and get tested for your family's sake, because we know the most likely transmission is within a household. So if we can test you, we can stop you spreading it to other people in your household. And come forward for your community's sake. Because then, if you have got a



case, we can contact-trace around you and make sure we don't end up with an outbreak. This is really, really important, as we lift restrictions going forward. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, do we [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, we're not. So we've done that contact-tracing, upstream and downstream, and we're trying to get more information to work that through.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yeah. She's in isolation at the moment. She had that initial test and she'll be having a subsequent test, because we know that early on in the illness, you may not have enough virus to be able to pick it up. So we will be doing further testing. But, of course, she'll be in quarantine for 14 days.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Yes. So it was done post-mortem, so after the gentleman had died, and it was contaminated with quite a bit of blood, so therefore it wasn't an effective test. So at this stage, I'm waiting for information from the Coroner, who is now responsible of course, for sorting out what may have killed the gentleman.

REPORTER:

Is it possible that this is a false negative?

DR YOUNG:

No, I don't believe so. There was a test done on a gene expert, which is a very sensitive test, and it came back positive. So I believe it was a positive. We'll be doing other tests, of course, under the Coroner's direction to determine if we can get other information.

REPORTER:

Are you still trying to connect it to the Rockhampton nurse [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. That's one of the investigations that we're pursuing at the moment.

REPORTER:

We know that there's a really high fly-in fly-out workers across those areas, have we established [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So that's all part of that contact tracing. So we sent an expert team into Blackwater to do all that work.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No. That's why – although we do all of that work, and we can do it – the most important thing every single time is don't wait for a phone call that you might be a contact. Get tested. So anyone who has any symptoms, no matter how mild they are – or, indeed, if they think they've got symptoms and they're not sure, because we all know there are times when we might have an itchy throat or a runny nose, get tested. That is really, really important. That is, in fact, more important than the work our contact-tracers are doing, who are all experts, who are committed, who know what they're doing. We also need every Queenslanders to be committed to work through this together.

REPORTER:

Those acquaintance contacts are they all based in Blackwater and do they [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

There were two contact elsewhere, so we're just following up with those at the moment. But most of those contracts were in Blackwater.

REPORTER:

Can you rule out more community transmission?

DR YOUNG:

No, of course I can't rule out more community transmission. That's why I'm asking for anyone with any symptoms could come forward and be tested. That is exceptionally, critically important.

REPORTER:

What else do we know about [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That's now something for the Coroner to go and investigate. So the Coroner has all his medical records and that will all be worked through.

REPORTER:

There was some suggestion from Blackwater yesterday that his partner has not [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

She did have some. That has to all be worked through. Again, it's very difficult early on in the disease, that people can have some very mild symptoms and they're not sure. So the most important thing now is for the next 14 days she will of course, as being a close contact, will be in quarantine, and we'll work with her during that time.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, there's – as some of you have already mentioned – there is a significant fly-in fly-out workforce, so all of that is being investigated as well.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, that's a decision that we need to all make, and there'll be discussions as well at National Cabinet.

REPORTER:

The Premier said earlier she'd be making recommendations to the Federal Government about the Biosecurity Act which the Federal Government [inaudible] is the Biosecurity Act still necessary [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So the Biosecurity Act has been very, very effective here in Queensland, and across Australia, in preventing transmission of COVID-19 into those discrete First Nations communities, so it has been extremely effective. There are other ways we could manage similar controls, so that's the discussion I believe will be happening.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] in those communities because their situation is not easing [inaudible] discriminated against, is there a roadmap for them?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, that's being worked through with them. So of course they're a critical part in terms of developing that road map.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] to let them know when there is something happening?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. They're aware of the road map that's being developed.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] hotel in Brisbane who is applying to see his terminally ill mother [inaudible] he said he's applied for an exemption [inaudible] can you confirm [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. He did a while ago apply for an exemption and although it's a very, very sad situation, we know that we don't have any cases in Hervey Bay whereas, from where he's come, there are a lot of cases. So I did provide the exemption for him to come to Australia, but required him to spend 14 days in quarantine before he could travel up to Hervey Bay. That's correct.

REPORTER:

He's got to wait [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Of course, I'm happy, yes. The minute he's finished that quarantine, of course he's able to travel.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] you said there were two contacts [inaudible] does that imply that he had left Blackwater since February?

DR YOUNG:

No. It doesn't. It implies it that those people visited him in Blackwater.

REPORTER:

The Prime Minister said this morning that there was no national health advice about internal borders and he said that each state has to justify their position. [inaudible] borders, can you justify your position [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

The people who live on the border are able to come into Queensland. So if they work here, if they shop here, if they have health care here, of course they can come in and they have been given exemptions in large numbers. So that's not been an issue. Also, children who come into Queensland to go to boarding school and live near the borders, there's no issue there. So this is about people coming into Queensland for recreational purposes only, away from that border. So people who want to travel up into Queensland for a holiday, and we saw increasing numbers of Queenslanders contracting infections because of travel interstate. So we had to do something at that point, because we were seeing those numbers increase, and that's the information that we're keeping under close review.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, at the moment, that is the standard agreement about when you can say that outbreaks are over. That's two incubation periods.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] explain the situation [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well, I can't go into a great level of detail there. Obviously, I haven't been privy to those conversations. They've been between our public health unit contact tracers and her. But I understand there's been widespread reporting that she did take a trip to Blackwater. My advice via the Chief Health Officer is that the timing of that trip means it's unlikely that she is the source of the infection, but it's possible and so they're continuing to work through that. Obviously, we've had very low numbers of confirmed cases, and very low numbers in the central Queensland region, and so while it might just be a coincidence our public health unit will investigate thoroughly whether this is a possible source of the infection.

REPORTER:

Why would she go there?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well again, according to media reports and the advice I've received, she said that she went there to see either the sunrise or the sunset, that's the advice that she provided to the public health unit at the time. At the time she said that she had no contact with anyone on the ground and so there was no reason for our contact tracers to think that there was any risk associated with that trip.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] partner was aware [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That's my understanding, that in those interviews she said that she had been to Blackwater but that she had had no contact with anyone else there.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] sunrise or a sunset, 400 kilometres, [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Obviously it is a bit curious and that's why those investigators will again talk with her and see if there's any details she can now recall or any further information that she can provide that might assist them.

REPORTER:

She said she'd only been going to visit her son [inaudible], is that true?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I haven't heard that level of detail. We're not aware of that level of detail, we're happy to look into it though.

REPORTER:

You spoke of the timing, does that imply that she wasn't infectious at the time or he was already infectious?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

My understanding is that he had symptoms prior to her travel to Blackwater.

REPORTER:

Did that nurse travel anywhere else?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We know she travelled to Brisbane. That is considered the most likely source of her infection. As to any other travel, I don't have any further information on that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I understand that the Chief Health Officer has asked for sewage testing to be conducted in Blackwater. That will give us a sense of whether this case has been locally acquired and whether there is asymptomatic transmission there in Blackwater. That's a useful tool for our public health officers.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

The University of Queensland started some testing here in Brisbane as a proof of concept and it worked. Now, they are looking at a plan on how they might put it across the state. But at this point in time we know we don't have any significant numbers of cases in Queensland. Although we are not doing as much testing as I would like to see, the testing that they're doing is showing very, very low numbers. The best thing we can continue to do is anyone with symptoms to come forward and get tested. Testing sewerage will give us an idea down the track as to how many cases there might be out there but it's not what I'd like to see at the moment. I think that's a useful additional tool. At the moment the best thing we can all do is get tested if we have got any symptoms.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That's why I've said to Blackwater, if you have got any symptoms or you think you might have symptoms or anything at all, please come forward. Unfortunately, yesterday we saw low

30's. Today, we've had a few more people book in for testing but I would like to see far more people in Blackwater come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, it makes it really difficult because the ones that I want to find are the symptomatic ones because they are more likely to have the infection. If you just went and tested everyone with no symptoms, the vast majority of those people would not have the disease, whereas if you test everyone with symptoms, there's a higher likelihood that some of them will have the disease. That's why I'm saying please, if you got any symptoms or fever or history of fever, come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

No, the partner isn't the case. The partner is currently in quarantine. She has been tested once and she did not have any virus. Where she worked is not a problem.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

In Blackwater. I don't know which home she is in.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Yes, it's easily accessible anywhere in the state. GP's can organise it. Hospitals can organise it. Community clinics, Aboriginal controlled health sector can, anywhere and everywhere in the state can organise for someone to be tested. It's a very simple process.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Police will be managing that. They always have systems in place that they can immediately respond. They have a workforce across the state so there's no concerns to the town for that.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].



DR YOUNG:

Negative.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible].

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm not going to get into the details of individual cases. Obviously, just based on what I've seen in the media reports, this is a particular tragic, heart wrenching and no doubt it will be investigated in detail both the child safety response as well as what's happened here and I'll let those processes play out.

REPORTER:

What do you make of Pauline Hansen's to challenge the border closing in the High Court?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, it was only a month ago I think when Pauline Hansen was saying we should have a border in North Queensland. I think she's more desperate to seek headlines than she is concerned about this virus and its impact on Queenslanders. The Queensland Government is putting the interest and the health and the well-being of Queenslanders first and will continue to do so regardless of what Pauline Hansen or her mate say.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier can you tell us about the roadmap for aboriginal communities [inaudible].

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We will continue to have those discussions over today and tomorrow. We have outlined we'll have more to say what stage 2 looks like in Queensland on Sunday and it's possible that we might have updated information on the restrictions as they relate to indigenous communities there. The decision to lock them down was taken after deep consultation with them and their community leaders and of course we will continue to talk with them and listen to them as we make those decisions.

REPORTER:

Would that be a matter for discussion tomorrow at the National Cabinet? The Premier said that she would take this issue to that meeting.


DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm sure that National Cabinet discusses those kinds of things at each of their meetings. Considers all of these things at their meetings but I am not privy to that agenda.

DR YOUNG:

Can I just mention one more thing?

DEPUTY PREMIER:



Yes, go for it.

DR YOUNG:

Today the focus is on Blackwater, tomorrow we will get a case somewhere else in the state and the focus will be there. What I implore all of you because you are absolutely critical. The media of this state is to get out the message, don't wait til you have a case in your town, don't wait til something happens, get tested now. That is critical. All 5.1 million of us in Queensland. If we have any symptoms, please immediately get tested, don't wait for something to happen. That way, we will find the case before we have an outbreak and that way we can make sure that we only have one case, we don't have a cluster of cases. Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DRG

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steve Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 29 May 2020

Duration: 15 minutes 05 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

A fantastic day of zero new cases in Queensland. We continue to have six active cases spread throughout the state, however just one of those is in hospital. They are in ICU receiving ventilation. We have now completed 176,462 tests. Today marks two weeks since the confirmed case at the North Rockhampton Nursing Centre, that two-week period is what we would normally consider the incubation... the safe incubation period. In that time, we've performed 1500 tests on Rockhampton locals, all of them have come back negative. The investigation is underway, that it is great news that we can declare that that outbreak is over with just that one case. Quite an incredible outcome. It has also been a very good test for our rapid response capability, that capability will be handy to us in the future when we have future cases. I want to finally say that when our public health officials contact you, no matter what it is about, it is incredibly important that you are honest, truthful and fulsome in what you tell them. Lives are literally at risk. Our public health officials are doing their best to keep Queenslanders safe and it is incredibly important that if they contact you, you tell them the truth.

DR YOUNG:

No new cases overnight in Queensland which is excellent, and at this stage we have six active cases across the state, which is also very, very good. But that doesn't mean that we should be complacent, the most important thing that every single one of us needs to do, is if we're sick with any symptoms, not matter how mild, or a fever or a history of a fever to immediately get tested. If we do that, we will protect ourselves, we will protect our families and we will protect our community.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible] sorry, Blackwater, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, so we had 220 people from Blackwater tested yesterday, which was excellent, they came forward. And we've got more people being tested today. So far there has not been any positive test results, except of course, for the unfortunate 30 year old gentleman who died.

REPORTER:

And can you explain to us, have you been able to talk with this Rockhampton nurse any further since yesterday morning? And what sort of information [inaudible] to you?

DR YOUNG:

That is part of the investigation that is currently being finalised, and it is very, very important that we are able to do that and get some additional information from that individual because her story has changed over the timeframe.

REPORTER:

What has changed? What has changed, sorry?

DR YOUNG:

That is all part of the investigation.

REPORTER:

What has changed [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No I can't, that is part of the investigation. So, she gave us one story and then subsequent to that we found out additional information. So, we need to try and untangle and sort that through, that is very, very important. But the good news is that no resident in the North Rockhampton Nursing Centre contracted the infection. The is very, very good news.

REPORTER:

With the changing story, was that like the date she travelled to Blackwater, did you find she got out of the car?

DR YOUNG:

I don't have any of the specifics because the story has changed so many times. I think it is best that we wait for the investigation and we sort it out. The most important thing here is that if anyone, anywhere in the state has any symptoms, not matter how mild, that they come forward and get tested. That way we will manage, no matter what information get from different people. The testing is the most important thing we can do.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, the situation with Mark Talbot who has travelled from the US and now would like to go to Hervey Bay to see his dying mother, has his entire situation, including his living situation in the US and his proposed alternative place of quarantine in Hervey Bay, been considered?

DR YOUNG:

All the arrangements around that gentleman have been considered. The facts are that he is coming from a part of the US that has had an enormous number of not only cases, but unfortunately deaths, he is coming into Queensland, which is of course fine and he is in quarantine which protects Queenslanders from potentially getting the infection from him. The

problem here is that Hervey Bay has not had cases for a significant length of time and is a population with a lot of very vulnerable people in it. So, I do feel for Mr Talbot and his situation, compassionate grounds of course are important grounds and I would dearly love to be able to allow him to go up to Hervey Bay, but I can't until he has done his 14 days quarantine.

REPORTER:

What is it about his particular situation? I mean he has proposed being able to hop into a car, straight out of the Westin Hotel, drive the four hours without having contact with any other person, he has even offered to take a packed lunch. What is it about that trip that poses a risk to the rest of the community?

DR YOUNG:

The risk is that he is going into Hervey Bay that is a population of very vulnerable people.

REPORTER:

And you've got a letter from his family doctor that says that he can stay in his brother's B&B, upstairs, totally separate and different entrance to downstairs and said that he can quarantine there.

DR YOUNG:

That is a little bit illogical, if could it out, if he is happy to stay in a totally separate environment, he can stay in the hotel where he is.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] cooperating with you [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That will be an inquiry, that will be a question to put to the investigators when they talk to her.

REPORTER:

So you're not sure where that is, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

The investigation hasn't started. It is being put in place and it will commence and then that will be up to them.

REPORTER:

And is there any way of [inaudible] linked with this fellow [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, there's two ways. First by getting information from her, so we can link it in time, and we've not been able to get that information until now to be able to work out her incubation

periods, her periods of illness etcetera. The second is we'll be able to look at the virus if we're able to grow it from... if we're able to sequence her and the gentleman in Blackwater.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It depends on a lot of variables. So, it'll depend on the coroner, so when we're able to get a sample and whether we're able to get sufficient sample to sequence and I don't know how long that would take.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

There's a lot of hypotheticals there. We need to get the virus first and sequence it before we then can work that out.

REPORTER:

Why is it taking so long to find out [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That is a question to ask her.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, do you now believe that she got out of the car in Blackwater?

DR YOUNG:

I have no idea what she did or didn't do, that is up to the investigation to try and determine that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] ICU for a number of weeks, is that the same person?

DR YOUNG:

I am not sure about that.

REPORTER:

Can you explain the testing that has been done [inaudible] in south east Queensland, with the reports that a [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, we know that there were some contacts down in that part of the state who've been tested and are negative.



REPORTER:

Can we report that the man who died in Blackwater is a close contact [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. I don't believe it was that many people. It's a small party.

REPORTER:

With the Rockhampton situation in the nursing home, when will all of the patients who have been moved out of there, when will they go back?

DR YOUNG:

When it's safe for them. There is no rush to do that. We did have to hurry initially when we moved those residents because we needed them all to get into private bedrooms with single bathrooms so that had to happen quickly. There is no rush to return them. It can be done slowly and carefully.

REPORTER:

In your investigations for something like this, I don't know specifically about this case but in your investigations, would the investigators ask somebody, have you been overseas?

DR YOUNG:

The contact racers?

REPORTER:

Yes.

DR YOUNG:

Yes, off course they would.

REPORTER:

Even if it was outside the...

DR YOUNG:

Yes, off course.

REPORTER:

Can you rule out whether she's been overseas recently?

DR YOUNG:

Rule it out?

REPORTER:

Has it been confirmed that she hasn't been overseas?

DR YOUNG:

I believe so but that's part of that investigation to sort that through. But they will be able to have access to a whole range of sources of information.

REPORTER:

How disappointing is it that we have the nurse... [inaudible], dishonest for investigators?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I am not going to comment on the individual case but I will repeat what I said earlier. It's incredibly disappointing that someone would ever lie to our public health officials. Their motivations are to simply keep Queenslanders safe. It's incredibly important that people are fulsome and truthful in what they tell us.

REPORTER:

And what will there be any sort of... is there a way, the nurse is claiming that she wasn't asking questions especially... or offer this information. Will you be going to check on this investigation to see if the right stuff has happened in this investigation on the department side of things?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

In addition to the work of our public health officials, I asked the Director-General to commission a health service investigation, that's a formal investigation under the Health Boards Act and that will get to the bottom of all of those matters. It appears to me incredibly unlikely that somebody wasn't asked whether they had travelled overseas when there's such a focus of our investigation efforts of all coronavirus cases.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'm not aware of that level of detail, the date of it or what restrictions were in place at that particular point in time but obviously there are penalties for holding parties in contravention of the restrictions and that will all be considered.

REPORTER:

As in your Deputy Premier role, the situation in Stafford, do we know what involvement did the department had? They say their neighbours had recorded this situation to the department multiple times.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Unfortunately, I can't comment on individual child safety matters. All I can say though from what I see in the media, as any Queensland parent would feel. It's horrific and distressing and heartbreaking and clearly all of these matters will need to be investigated. We have significantly increased for child neglect and abuse. Those penalties will apply, the Department of Child Safety receives a call on abuse or neglect every 15 minutes. They are all

investigated and assessed but when it comes to that individual case, I'll have to leave that to the investigators.

REPORTER:

With the investigation, will that be just a normal part of the course if for some reason somebody's known to the department? Is that just a normal part of the course of the investigation or will there be a special investigation for this case? Do you know?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look that's a level of detail that would probably need to be referred to the Child Safety Minister's office.

REPORTER:

Do you know what [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I don't know.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, what are your thoughts on Mark Talbot's situation coming in from the US and trying to get to Hervey Bay?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Obviously I feel for him but it is those quarantine initiatives that have kept Queenslanders safe. They've been incredibly important, and I think when Queenslanders hear our Chief Health Officer say that she cannot make an exception in this case I think they understand that she will have considered all of the factors.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is there a public accountability to this? [inaudible] a lot of Ministers today saying we can't because of [inaudible] where does the public [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'm not across the detail of those investigations. No doubt there will be some form of public reporting. All I can say is how distressing I find it as a parent to see young people experiencing that kind of abuse.

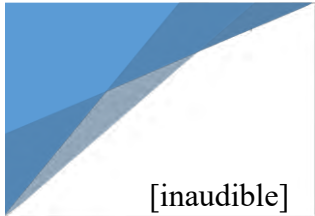
REPORTER:

Dr Young, can I just check with you – the post-mortem that's being done on the man from Blackwater, do you have a timeframe from when the [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That's up to the Coroner.

REPORTER:



[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That will be looked at as part of the review process.

REPORTER:

What health advice have you given to the Premier on that border review?

DR YOUNG:

Just the numbers of cases that we're still seeing in other states.

REPORTER:

Are you pursuing an elimination strategy now given you've got so little [inaudible] you're saying elsewhere you want two incubation periods before you open the borders? Is it now a possibility?

DR YOUNG:

We won't be able to pursue an elimination strategy because we still do have our borders, our international borders open. So we expect people to continue coming into Queensland, into Australia, and they will bring the virus. So that's why our quarantine strategy is actually critically important.

REPORTER:

Just on the preparedness if possibly we did get a second wave – are we better prepared now than we were in March?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we are much, much better prepared.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Deputy Premier Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 31 May 2020

Duration: 40 minutes

E&OE

PREMIER:

A good day for Queensland, and once again can I thank everyone? Zero new cases overnight, our total is 1058 and we only have five active cases in Queensland. And this is a tremendous job that everyone in this state has been doing and I am so proud of the work that you've all done, and it is the fact that we are still practicing our social distancing and we are taking measured and responsible steps. Also too, people are taking the advice if they are sick to stay at home, and people are getting tested. So, thank you Queensland. Well today we are going to talk about our easing of state two restrictions, and in more good news I can announce today that from the 1st of June, we will be able to have gatherings of 20 people. So, from tomorrow, midday, and I know that means a lot to families out there, a lot of families haven't seen each other, they haven't been able to come together and this is excellent news, and it is because of the tremendous work that Queensland has done, and our great health response. And because we have had such a fantastic health response in Queensland, today I can announce that we will be opening up Queensland for Queenslanders. This is tremendous news I think will be well received by a lot of industries across Queensland, and two in particular. First of all I want to thank the tourism industry for engaging in lengthy talks with me over the last few weeks, but particularly last week I had meeting with tourism operators from up and down the coast, I've met with tourism operators on the Gold Coast and I understand how difficult it is for this industry. This industry means a lot to Queensland and it means a lot to me. And to meet people first-hand who've had to close up their businesses, who've had to put off staff or put them on hold, utilising JobKeeper, but wanting to know when they can get some more certainty. So from tomorrow, Queenslanders will be able to travel anywhere in Queensland. This has been brought forward because of the tremendous work. So, if you have a camper van and you want to hitch up your trailer and get going to the outback, now is your opportunity in Queensland. If you, I notice there was a gentleman who wants to sail back to Rockhampton, he can go and do that, and I know I have had many requests from people wanting to know when they can visit their mum in Maryborough, or their father out in Longreach. So, from tomorrow at lunchtime, Queenslanders can travel anywhere in Queensland, and that means you can actually stay overnight. So, to the hotels and motels, to all of the accommodation sector out there in Queensland, I think this is the boost that you need as well. Please make sure that you have your COVID Safe Plans in place, lets open the doors. And the best ways that families can support our multi-billion-dollar tourism industry this year, is for the school holidays to back Queensland tourism. And there is no better time to hop in the car for that once in a lifetime drive trip around Queensland. Take the family to places that you have

never been before. This is Queensland backing Queenslanders and it is opening up Queensland for Queenslanders. In further easing of restrictions, I can also announce today that from tomorrow, our bars, our cafes, our restaurants can open up to 20 people. Once again, I want to thank all of our restaurants and cafes out there that have opened up to 10 over the past couple of weeks. I know it has been difficult and you've continued your take-away, but now you can go up to 20. And from midday from the following Friday, lunchtime on Friday the 12th of June, if you have a COVID Safe Plan in place, and you have extra capacity as per the four-square metre rule, you can have 20 people in each section. So that again, I think we've had a lot of discussions with the representatives of the hospitality industry, we've had discussions with the unions, we've had discussions with industry, and this is what they've been asking for. So, for example the Brekkie Creek or the Story Bridge Hotel or the Paddo Tavern, for example, or even the surf clubs – I met some managers of a surf club down the Gold Coast – now you promise me a drink so I'll be coming down to join you, hopefully next weekend when you're open. But what that means, per each room for the four square metres, you can divide and have 20 in each room, and I know the Deputy Premier will go into a bit more detail about that. So, this is about listening and responding to the views of Queenslanders, and I really want to thank for the amount of engagement that these key industries have shown to working with the government. We also had our first meeting of the alliance which is representative of key stakeholders, and also the unions, working together last week and that went incredibly well. And we're working together on our economic recovery. Because Queensland has done well with our health response, we can now kickstart our economy faster in Queensland. It is almost like a Queensland bubble for this month of June. It is making sure that we get our economy up and slowly you want to see too, people returning to the workforce, of course where it is safe and responsible. So Queensland, please keep up with the social distancing, make sure that you're listening to all the health advice, practicing that hand washing and everything that everyone has been doing so well. I was encouraged, I went to the Jindalee Home Base yesterday just to pick up a few things, and everyone was doing the social distancing, and they also said to me, they reiterated that they do not want a second wave here in Queensland. And I don't want a second wave, the government doesn't want a second wave and families don't want a second wave. So we are opening up Queensland in a responsible manner and we can do that because we have had such a terrific health response here in Queensland because of the great work Queenslanders have been doing. So I will hand over to the Deputy Premier and Dr Young and we've got Daniel Gschwind from the tourism sector here as well, and thank you Daniel for all the work you've been doing, working with the government over the past few weeks, and then we're happy to take some questions.

DP

Thank you Premier. Another day of no new COVID cases in Queensland is fantastic news. In fact, for the month of May, we've had just 16 cases, only two of them are confirmed to be locally acquired and four are still under investigation. In the bit over two weeks since we went to the first stage of easing of restrictions, when we went to that stage we had 1055 confirmed cases, we now just have 1058. Only three more than when we went to that next stage more than two weeks ago. When we went to that stage, we had 17 active cases, we now have just five. Only one of them is in hospital and they are now off ventilation. When we released our road map, our three-stage roadmap we led the country. Queensland was the first

state to do that, and we said we would continue to assess according to the numbers, according to the experience here in Queensland, and that we would make changes when we could and when it was appropriate. And it is the hard work of Queenslanders that is paying off here today. We are now able to bring forward stage two, and ease more restrictions in stage two. We are able to allow Queenslanders to do more, sooner, because we've been so successful at reducing the number of COVID cases. We are able to allow Queenslanders to travel anywhere within the state, whether that is the Gold Coast, the Sunny Coast, Cairns, the Whitsundays. Now is the time to dust off your Queensland bucket list. What are the national parks you've always wished you've been, which great walks do you wish you had done, and now is the time to plan a trip with your family, either a long weekend or in the school holidays, get out and see Queensland. It is an incredible state, a beautiful state and now is a great time to go and experience it and support our wonderful tourism operators. From tomorrow, our hospitality providers will be able to have up to 20 customers, our pubs, cafes, clubs restaurants, and during the week we will work with them to finalise their COVID Safe Industry Plans, we hope to have them finalised by Friday, allowing them next weekend to open up to even more. So if you are a café with an indoor and outdoor space, under that COVID Safe Plan, provided those spaces are big enough, you can have 20 customers in each of them. If you run a pub that has a public bar, a sports bar, a beer garden and a restaurant, you could have 20 in each of those spaces. A pub like that could have 80 customers at one time. Those COVID Safe Plans will go to things like hygiene, cleaning, as well as record keeping of customers and reducing the number of staff interacting with each group of customers. Some of the implementation of that might get challenging for some of those staff and so I just urge people to be patient with them, to be kind with them and understand that they are adopting to new practices, as we all are, but it is those new practices that will continue to keep us safe in this stage two. Also, gyms will be able to open again with up to 20 customers, 20 patrons, they will also be working on a COVID Safe Plan that will allow larger gyms to have up to 20 people in each defined space, dependant on their size. Venues that have much larger spaces will have the option of temporarily partitioning their spaces to allow them to have more people with that maximum of 20 per space, and four square metres per person. We are also announcing today a roadmap to ease restrictions for our remote indigenous communities. They have taken some very difficult steps in locking their communities down, that has been very challenging for them, but it has also kept them safe. We've had no COVID cases in those remote indigenous communities. Just as we worked with their leaders to put those restrictions in place, we've been working with their leaders to discuss how we can ease those restrictions. It is a little more complicated in that some of those restrictions are administered under federal law and some of them under our Chief Health Officer's directions. And so we are writing to the commonwealth – have written to the commonwealth – to ask them to assist us in a three-stage easing of restrictions for indigenous communities. Effective immediately, people returning to those communities will be able to do their quarantine in community, right now they have to do that quarantine outside of community. So that is stage one. Stage two is reliant on that federal government process, but we hope for it to be in place for the 12th of June, that will allow indigenous communities that close, that are on the border that are linked to larger towns to travel to those towns. The best example being Yarrabah being able to travel to Cairns, residents of Yarrabah being able to travel to Cairns, and I know that will be very welcome on those communities. And then the third stage will be lifting those restrictions entirely and that will be done in conjunction with

the other stages of the Queensland roadmap. Also, I can report that our hospital and health services have been encouraged to 100 per cent activity of elective surgery. You will recall that early on – largely because of a global shortage of protective equipment – we were forced to suspend non-urgent elective surgery, we've been gradually increasing the amount of non-urgent elective surgery, our HHS's each have their own plans, our biggest HHS's are already at 100 per cent activity for elective surgery and we hope to clear those waiting lists just as quickly as we possibly can. We want to ensure that Queenslanders, no matter what their ailment, get the treatment that they need as soon as they possibly can.

DR YOUNG

No new cases in Queensland overnight, and yesterday there were no new cases in Queensland. Although, yesterday there were 12 new cases in Australia, 11 of them in Victoria and one in New South Wales. But because of the work that has been done by Queenslanders across our state, we now have five active cases in Queensland, one of them in hospital. So that means that it is perfectly safe for us to open up our economy, open up our communities and all get moving again, that is really, really important and it is great that we can do this. There are five things that we need to all keep in mind so that we can continue along this journey. The first, if you're sick with any symptoms, please stay at home and get tested. The second, and this is a personal responsibility, wherever possible maintain 1.5 metre distance from other people. The places you are going to are required to maintain one person per four square metres, but you need to maintain that distance where it is possible, of course. Then the third is to wash your hands regularly, that is also very important. The fourth, is that at this stage of our roadmap it is important that we only gather in groups of 20, so whether in our home or going about the community, and the reason for that is that we can then rapidly get hold of the people in that group of 20 to contact trace. Unfortunately, less than a quarter of Australians have downloaded the app, so we still need to have mechanisms to rapidly contact trace, that is very important. If you haven't downloaded the app, please think about doing it, I have, all members of my family have, it is very important. And then the last thing is that you can travel anywhere in Queensland, except for those areas that are still restricted because of the *Biosecurity Act*, so that is discreet first nations communities. So if people can remember those five things and follow them, I know we'll keep everyone safe and we will continue to move forward. Thank you.

DANIEL GSCHWIND

Thank you. The Premier's announcement today will be an enormous relief for our tourism industry. Our industry has been at a complete standstill for the last two or three months, and the billions of dollars we talk about that are missing out of the revenue from businesses and from community, they are not abstract figures, they are the livelihood of tens of thousands of businesses, of hundreds of thousands of staff in this state. We now see the easing of restrictions at an accelerated rate, faster than the roadmap predicted, is an enormous relief for the industry and is enormously welcome by, I am sure, every single tourism operator in this state. It will allow us to rebuild the winter season to some extent, it will allow us to capture an enormous potential of Queenslanders wanting to travel, wanting to bust out of their four walls and experience this great state. So, the operators will be ready. We have in place guidelines that the Chief Health Officer hopefully will approve very soon and every sector of

our industry will be able to provide safe environments for customers and for staff. As an industry we are committed to that and we will continue to work with the Queensland Government to make sure there is a coordinated and well-planned resurfacing of our industry in store. We are absolutely committed to make the most of the opportunities that the great destinations right across this state offer, not just as business redevelopment but also as a community rebuilding. The tourism industry plays an enormously important part in keeping communities together and alive, it is a matter of local pride, it is a matter of keeping the heritage alive in communities, looking after the environment. All these things tourism is doing all the time. This disruption that we've experienced is the reset and it gives us as an industry and as a state an opportunity, not just to rebuild, but to build better. So, now to be at this stage, in an accelerated easing of restrictions, we are hopeful that our industry will be on a solid road to recovery. It will be tough, and we will have to do a lot more work, with the government, to allow businesses to recover, but it is something that we will approach with optimism and with great determination. Thank you.

PREMIER

I should also add too, being a Sunday, that churches will be able to have 20 people attend, but if they COVID Safe Plans and if they can separate those areas as per the four square metre rule, they will be able to have more. So, I know that is very important to a lot of people out there. Okay, we're happy to take some questions.

REPORTER

Still no movement on borders, Premier?

PRE

As I said, June is about Queensland supporting Queenslanders, so we had a meeting at National Cabinet, we've got further epidemiology coming into National Cabinet in the two weeks, and we will, as we said by the roadmap, we will definitely review that at the end of June.

REPORTER

Why midday instead of midnight, for easing these restrictions?

PREMIER

We just decided, as a government, that midday gives people a lot more flexibility, allows the lunchtime crowd as well, so it gives them more capacity to take more bookings.

REPORTER

Will there be another month until we see a revision, or will there be a possibility for a, well, sooner?

PREMIER

That is it for June. That is the second stage, and as I said we will review it at the end of each month. We brought it forward because Queensland has done such a remarkable job.

REPORT

Premier, was the border decision considered at today's meeting?

PREMI

We have been considering that during the week, and as Dr Young said too, we still have active cases in New South Wales and Victoria. But there was good discussion at National Cabinet and even the Prime Minister said that during stage three, many states were looking at leisure travel then, and that is our commitment that we will look at how all of the states are going in relation to what interstate travel can be allowed in stage three.

REPORT

Premier, are you a bit more hopeful now that perhaps the border might be able to be reopening earlier than perhaps September, now that the cases overall in Australia have settled down a bit?

PREM

There is going to be a meeting at National Cabinet, and in two weeks' time we get the epidemiology of what has been happening over the last month with the mass easing of restrictions across the nation. Of course, different states are at different parts. So we will look at all of that information and of course, we will be discussing that at National Cabinet and that'll feed into our decision making for the end of June. There is a lot of testing that is happening around the nation, a lot of results are looking good, but we do have some concerns about continuing to see active cases in New South Wales and Victoria. But that may ease over the coming month, so let me make it very clear, the border will remain closed for the month of June and at the end of June we will actively consider all of the circumstances across the nation. The Prime Minister made comments to that effect on Friday, and I support those comments that he made.

REPORT

Does that leave the door slightly open for perhaps an earlier border relaxation than the original July 12 date? Like you brought some of these forward because of good results, is there a chance that we might see the border open earlier than...

PREMIER

No, we will make a decision at the end of the month, which will then give people two weeks to prepare, if that was to happen.

REPOR

So it is possible that we could see the border open?

PREMI

It depends, and I am not going to give anyone any false hope. The National Cabinet was that we were clearly going to look at that epidemiology in the middle of June, and that will feed into our decision making. And can I say, I think every other state and territory is going to be doing exactly the same thing. So it is not just Queensland doing this, just remember, it is always left out that South Australia has their borders closed, Western Australia has their

borders closed, the Northern Territory has their borders closed and Tasmania has their borders closed. So, it is not just Queensland but once again, all of the states and territories are looking good, so we need to make sure that we take into account that most important epidemiology that comes into National Cabinet in a fortnight's time.

REPORTER

And so just to clarify, gyms, are they allowed to reopen on Friday as well, or is that the June...

PREMIER

They can open from tomorrow, they can have 20 people from tomorrow and then on Friday with the COVID Safe Plans, they can have more depending on how much room they have.

REPORTER

Who will be policing the numbers, and what fines can be issued if people go over those numbers as well?

PREMIER

That is the police have the ability to go and... working with the local governments as well, to make sure that people are enforcing it. But can I just say that there is such goodwill from industries right across our state to get this right. They know how important it is, no one wants to see a second wave and it is really important that people adhere to that social distancing.

REPORTER

Is there an upper limit, so a large pub or something like that, with a big beer garden, is there an upper limit on how many people can be in any one venue, keeping in mind 20 per section?

PREMIER

It depends how big they are, but they would have to separate. So you can't have everyone in a large open space, and the industry is very well aware of this. It is also really important, Dr Young stressed to us, that we are able to have all the names of the people that attend, and of course the staff also need to be aware of their responsibilities that they can't be mixing from one group to another group, as well. So it is really important that we go from the 10 to the 20 in a staged process, and I think honestly everyone is going to do the right thing here. There is so much goodwill across the state and our health response has been amazing and that is why now we can focus on our economic response and easing some of these restrictions.

REPORTER

Premier, back on March 1st you announced a \$2 million interstate tourism campaign to get people from interstate to come and holidays here for the upcoming school holidays at that point, do you regret that campaign in hindsight?

PREMIER

No, because we didn't know what the results were going to be and we were in the midst of a pandemic, and I think it would've been negligent. But that money will still be utilised for

encouraging domestic travel and I think this is the shot in the arm that the tourism industry has been asking for. And I thank everyone, the tourism industry wasn't expecting this until the middle of the month, we decided to bring it forward and I really want to thank all of those tourism operators that worked very closely with the government, and also too Daniel presented at the alliance meeting we had during the week as well, and made it very clear that this was an industry that was hurting and the best way that we can support this industry is for Queensland to support Queenslanders.

REPORTER:

So not all of that \$2 million is spent?

PREMIER:

You would have to ask the...I can get that from the Tourism Minister.

REPORTER:

Premier, it's actually a bigger acceleration than that, isn't it? Because intrastate travel was only supposed to be from 10 July?

PREMIER:

Yes, so it's travelling in your regions but because we've done such a great job Sarah, this is fantastic news that people can explore our great state, get your family packed up in the car and go out for the school holidays and it gives people time to plan as well. I'm very pleased that the chief health officer provided us with the advice that we can go ahead and do this. I really want to thank everyone who has been involved and especially the people that I've met out there who have raised this issue with me. There's been a lot of Zoom meetings and a lot of meetings on the Gold Coast.

REPORTER:

Has the feedback from the tourism industry been that this acceleration of intrastate travel will be enough to keep them going until the issues of interstate travels are eased further?

PREMIER:

Look, I think there's a lot of domestic travel here where you would have had a lot of people in the past who are travelling overseas. Overseas is out of the option at the moment. Look, can I tell you, we have the best beaches here in Queensland. The outback, if you've never a sunset in the outback or seen some of the remarkable hospitality of our outback pubs and the people out there. If you haven't been to Cairns before, Cairns is an amazing place and an amazing destination. Airlie Beach, the islands, I mean, there's so much that Queensland has to offer and as the Deputy Premier said. In the hundreds of National Parks, even camping. You know, put the tent at the back of the car and off you go with the kids as well. I mean, everyone loves as camping holiday as well.

REPORTER:

From next Friday, when the 20 per area of entertainment, Does that requires the CovidSafe plans to be submitted and approved by Government?



PREMIER:

The industries are putting in place those CovidSafe plans. They are making it a lot easier for restaurants and cafes and off course we have to keep to the 4 square metre rule. I might just get Dr Young to explain that to people so that they can understand because once Dr Young explained it to the Alliance members the other day too and they said they didn't realise why they had to have that 4 square metre rule. Would you mind Dr Young?

DR YOUNG:

Off course Premier. There are two things in terms of social distancing. There's a personal responsibility of keeping 1.5 metres away from other people as much as possible. Not in your own household with your own household members off course but when you are out and about. If you can do that, it's really important. There's also a business, if I can call it responsibility for making sure that the spaces that people are in have one person per 4 square metres. That's because if you look at the circumference of that area, so 2 metres, that allows for the 1.5 metre per different people, so if you look at that square. It's about looking at that whole space. Now we can't use up that entire space if you have a very, very large space to have more than 20 people because we also know it's the number of interactions you have with other people. And because we don't have that App we were hoping we could use, we are back to putting in contact tracing so we need to know the people who are in that group of 20. You can have multiple groups of 20 if you can make sure that those groups don't interact with one another. That's why if you have got a large venue that has a pub in it that people can be seated in, it's got a restaurant, it's got an outdoor area, it's got some sperate private rooms, you can have separate groups in each of them as long as you have kept a record of who's in each of those groups and as long as the staff don't move from group to group and as long as you've got a process that you know that people don't have to queue and gather for toilets or to pay their bills, those sorts of things. That's why we need those CovidSafe plans. Those CovidSafe plans are being put together by industry. I've already seen some of them and they've been extremely well done. People can just take those CovidSafe plan that industries have put together in consultation with their members, with unions, with myself and my team, they can take that plan and just follow it. Now, if there is a plan that doesn't suits their venue, for instance, I'm sure Australia Zoo wouldn't mind, Australia Zoo's an exception, there isn't a CovidSafe plan that will meet what they need to do because they are one of a kind and so they put in a separate plan to me. It was very, very well thought through and similarly if there are other plans like that, you know, Movieworld. Places like that, they'll have to have their own plan but for the vast, vast majority of people, they'll just be able to take the industry plan and look at it and implement that. They won't need to do anything more than that. Now for some venues, people will only need to follow a checklist. So beautician, they don't need to follow a plan but they have to follow a checklist and that checklist includes all of the things they need to tick off in terms of that one person pre 4 square metres, Keeping a record of who's attended, increase in cleaning, we all know it's those touch points that are important. It's those door knobs, everyone coming in and out and touch the door knob, they need increased cleaning. So there are some basic principles that are fairly clear and that I know that people have taken on board that people can apply.

So there's different things in place depending on what the risks are, but they're all available online and people can see them. And I'm just waiting on some of those last industry plans to come through. If they could all come through to me or my teams by Tuesday then we should have them all signed off, ready for Friday so that people can implement those larger numbers next weekend. So that's really important, I don't see any problems with any of that going forward.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] walk up customers?

DR YOUNG:

They can have walk up customers but they will just have to make sure that they have got their contact details. And this is for the safety of everyone – we know that if we can get onto cases immediately we won't get outbreaks. So we know if we can get that first initial case and manage it really, really tightly – which we can do – we've shown that in Queensland multiple times now – then we can stop an ongoing outbreak. That's really important. And we can only really do that if we've got those contact details. So you might remember early on during this pandemic I had to name a beautician's salon which I felt very uncomfortable doing because I don't like doing that. But I had no other way of getting out to the people that had attended. So that's why I'm asking that people keep a record of people who have attended so we can go directly to those people through their mobile in most cases and contact them. Otherwise I'm put in that position where I have to go out and name that venue and that's not good for anyone, it doesn't necessarily get to the people I need to get to and also means that venue will be stigmatised. So it's really important for everyone's sake for the sake of those people that we have their details and can get hold of them rapidly, but it's also important for the venue so we don't need to name the venue publicly and concern a lot of people. Because the other thing is people don't always hear the names of venues, so then they take the whole area, so instead of just that one venue all of a sudden that entire shopping centre was problematic. So that's why we really need to have that information although I know it's onerous we are asking that people keep that documentation for eight weeks. The reason being that if we were to miss the first case and we only picked up the subsequent cases so there had been a second wave, we would have to go right back to the first case. So people need to keep that information for eight weeks ready – I don't want to see it unless there's an issue – if there is an issue we would like to see it. If there isn't after eight weeks they can destroy it. And they can only use that information so public health authorities can contact people. They can use it for any other purpose.

REPORTER:

Is this a significant lifting...more broadly this is a significant lifting of the movement restrictions.

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

What makes you so confident that we won't see cases travel – especially from southeast Queensland to the regions?

DR YOUNG:

We might see cases – but what I'm confident about is that we've got the systems in place to manage them. So I believe Queenslanders have been really good in coming forward if they're sick and getting tested. They need to keep coming forward, and we can test 10,000 Queenslanders per day every single day. And if required I know we can go beyond that. At the moment we've not ever reached 5000 so we've got plenty of testing capacity. So if everyone just follows that one most important requirement – if you're sick stay home and get tested. So stay home so you don't spread whatever it is you have, but get tested so we know then if it's due to COVID-19 we can immediately contact trace and work out if there is anyone else and manage it very, very quickly. So that's why I have got confidence that we can go across the state. We've only got five active cases in Queensland today. Of course we don't know about the cases we don't know about...that's why it's so important that people get tested and people should never, ever think "oh, I live in Longreach, we've never had any cases here so I don't need to worry about that illness I've got". It doesn't matter where you live in Queensland, it doesn't matter where you've been...please, just get tested if you've got any respiratory symptoms at all – fever, or a history of fever or indeed if you're worried – if you don't know whether a symptom is COVID related or not. We know a lot of our population has chronic lung disease, they have asthma, bronchiectasis, and they possibly have a chronic cough, go and get tested because you wouldn't know whether that cough is new or your normal cough or your normal hayfever. So please, if everyone just gets tested if they're sick then we can manage things really quickly. We know that some people of course can get COVID-19 infections with no symptoms. And that's why if you've got any symptom it's really important to test because that's the tip – that's where we can go out and check in that community what has happened. So for instance, Rockhampton did the most brilliant job. The people of Rockhampton came forward and got tested and the people of Blackwater came forward and got tested in large numbers so we know we don't have other cases there which is very reassuring.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is there any update on the contact tracing of the man who died in Blackwater?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we've now tested all of those close contacts and all of them have been negative, and there have been a lot of other people in the town who have come forward and they have all been negative which is very reassuring.

REPORTER:

Is there any update around the nurse who visited the town and any clarity yet on how he may have come into contact with...

DR YOUNG:

That's part of the investigation. But we've done so much testing now in both Rockhampton and Blackwater that I'm reasonably comfortable that they don't have any new cases due to either case which is very good news.

REPORTER:

Do you regard that [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It was fortunate yes, I think we tested all of our systems to the hilt, and if there had been other cases I'm sure we would have found them and managed them. This is part of what we need to do to continue moving forwards so our Prime Minister and National Cabinet said early on that there were three things we had to have in place before we could start removing restrictions. One was to increase our testing capacity and we've got that in Queensland. Second, to increase our contact tracing ability and we have over 2000 people in Queensland who can contact trace if it were necessary. We've never needed that, but we absolutely have that in place. Unfortunately the app hasn't been downloaded by enough people to make it a completely useful tool, so we still need to do contact tracing using people. But that's fine, we have those systems in place and hopefully more Australians will download the app.

REPORTER:

Queensland...

DR YOUNG:

And then the third, sorry...

REPORTER:

Sorry, sorry yes...

DR YOUNG:

The third is we need to be able to rapidly respond so that one case doesn't become a cluster and an outbreak. And we've done that on quite a few occasions now. We did it up in Cairns of course with the lab workers up there, and there were no subsequent cases from that. We've done it in Rockhampton, we've done it in Blackwater, we've done it throughout the state and so we know our systems are there, and they're working and can rapidly get on top of any case that we're notified about but we can only know about cases if people get tested so it actually comes back to that whole testing issue and Queenslanders really please get tested if you have some symptoms.

REPORTER:

Queensland has done remarkably good work though – as you said we've seen case after case after case. Have we been lucky as well?



DR YOUNG:

I think you make your luck. It's the systems that we've put in place – and it's actually Queenslanders. Queenslanders understand the importance of community and all working together and all playing their part and I think as long as Queenslanders continue to do that which I am positive they will, we will continue to make our luck.

REPORTER:

Dr Young you mentioned the theme parks have been putting plans in place...

PREMIER:

Last question.

REPORTER:

...is there any indication as to when they might open? Are they separate entity? Are they seen differently?

DR YOUNG:

No, no they can open with 20 but I recognise that 20 is not much use for a theme park. So once we've got those COVID-safe plans as I've already seen for Australia Zoo, then yes they will be able to open.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer
Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 2 June 2020

Duration: 19 minutes 30 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well overnight we have one further case of COVID-19 in Queensland. It is a woman who has travelled through Africa recently, and is therefore confirmed to be an overseas acquired case, not local transmission. That leaves us with five active cases here in Queensland, two of those are in hospital, one on the Gold Coast and one in metro north. One of them is in intensive care. We have now done more than 200,000 tests in Queensland on more than 190,000 people. So we have tested 190,242 Queenslanders. You'll be aware that overnight the Coroner confirmed that they had multiple negative tests of COVID-19 post mortem on that man who died in Blackwater, tragically. Our ability to control this virus requires us to respond rapidly to every single positive test. We have to treat every positive test as though it is a positive case. However, I would like to personally apologise to his partner and his family for any distress that our actions in responding rapidly caused them. The loss of any life, particularly a life so young, is incredibly sad. I know it has been incredibly distressing for them and to have to grieve under these circumstances, under this level of scrutiny, in some cases in quarantine, has only compounded that tragedy and the grief. And to them, I am so deeply sorry.

DR YOUNG:

One new confirmed case overnight, a 41 year old lady who travelled back from Africa and was tested here at the Gold Coast whilst in quarantine and was confirmed positive. She was infectious while she was on the plane, but of course all of those other people on that plane are also in quarantine, so we will go and do some contact tracing of that plane just to check that everyone else is in quarantine, and whether or not they've got any symptoms. So that takes us to five active cases here in Queensland today. Then you would also have seen that the Coroner officially notified me last night that the gentleman who died in Blackwater, despite having multiple additional tests, there was no evidence of COVID-19 virus found. At this stage the Coroner is not sure of what the cause of death was, he is doing further tests to work that out. But, he is sure that there was no virus through their testing. Now, we received a positive test that was confirmed that night after he had died, it was a post mortem test and it was done because his partner said that he had had four weeks of flu-like symptoms. So, based on that, although we knew there were no active cases that we were aware of in Blackwater, a decision was made to rapidly respond. I did ask for a second test to be done that night, which was also done post mortem, which makes it difficult to do the test, and it was sent to Rockhampton to be tested urgently that night. It came back as invalid because the test was

contaminated with blood, so therefore the result was invalid. So I had one positive test with a gentleman with a four week history of a flu-like illness. Subsequent to that initial test, further tests were done to try and work out what the cause of that flu-like illness was and no other tests have come up positive for any other pathogen. So, I requested, required people in Blackwater who had any symptoms of respiratory disease or any fever or history of fever to come forward and be tested, and 605 did come forward and get tested. All have been negative. So, that was a tremendous response from the people in Blackwater and I thank them for that response. There were also a number of close contacts who were required to go into quarantine. They are being told today that they can end that quarantine early, and I thank all of those people who went into quarantine. And I actually thank all 63,000 Queenslanders who to date have gone into quarantine. As we saw last night, quarantine is one of the most effective ways of limiting the spread of this virus, and it is something that we don't take lightly but we will always ask for when there is a risk that someone has come into contact with a case.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is there anything else that you could have done on the night or the day after [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So on the night that I was told that this gentleman was positive, he'd had one positive test done, I immediately asked for a second to be done, and I asked for that to urgently go to Rockhampton. Unfortunately because the gentleman had been dead for several hours at that point, the test was contaminated with blood, so therefore it was an invalid test. I then asked if the body could be urgently transported to Brisbane for a full post mortem, remembering that as soon as he had died, he became a body under the jurisdiction of the Coroner, so all of this was done in consultation with the Coroner. So, he was moved to Brisbane and when he arrived in Brisbane a few days later, more tests were done. Unfortunately, we know at that stage that the tests could be negative because the virus has de-natured during that time. So, I don't believe there was anything more that could've been done that night. I had a positive test result in the context of a gentleman who had had a four week history of a flu-like illness.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I also want to address that question. I am very confident that the steps that the Chief Health Officer took were entirely appropriate in the circumstances. It is Queensland's very cautious approach that has kept Queenslanders safe throughout this pandemic and my faith... I have great faith in the decisions that the Chief Health Officer has taken throughout this case.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No it doesn't. what it does say though, is that throughout this we've been incredibly open and transparent, sharing so much information, literally all of the information we have we've been sharing with you each day, and in some cases we will later find out that that information was

wrong. But I would prefer to be criticised for being too transparent, for being too honest, for reacting too quickly than the alternative, which you've seen in other countries.

REPORTER:

You had so much certainty about this diagnosis, and you knew that there were two tests, one was positive, one was negative. You, the Premier and the Chief Health Officer unequivocally told us that he [inaudible].

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It is our approach to treat every positive test as a positive case and to respond rapidly as a positive case. We had one positive test and we had one contaminated test. That is precisely what we told you was the case on that day.

REPORTER:

You didn't tell us there was a second test. There was only that one at the scene.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I understand, we disclosed there was a second test and that it was contaminated with blood.

REPORTER:

Was politics involved in this review? The opposition are saying that there was a test because the Premier was coming under pressure because of the border closure?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That suggestion is pretty ridiculous Michael. We were responding to this as a positive test of Covid-19 in a small regional community that causes great concern for us and so we responded rapidly.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Unfortunately, we don't think we'll ever know the answer to that question. There are two potential answers here. One is that it was a false positive and the other is that it was a true positive and we won't know which it was but I am confident about the actions that was taken on that night to protect the community of Blackwater.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It is extremely rare to get a false positive but extremely rare things happen.

REPORTER:

We were told this is the third one, there's been two other miners in the region that also had false negatives?

DR YOUNG:

We had.....false...I'm sorry, false negatives or false positives?

REPORTER:

False positives.

DR YOUNG:

False positives. Yes, we know that in a low prevalence environment, which is where we are in Queensland. We have got 5 active cases today that we will get false positives. If you test enough people who are negative, you will get a false positive. We know that, it's just the maths.

REPORTER:

Are you confident that the nurse in Rockhampton ever had Covid-19?

DR YOUNG:

Yes because the subsequent tests that I wanted to be done on the individual in Blackwater were done on the individual nurse and they've come back positive. She had serology done which came back positive. So yes, I am absolutely confident that she had multiple tests done which were positive.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we assess all results that come to us.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It depends on the circumstances. For this gentleman, it concerned me that he was in Blackwater that hadn't had any active cases so that's why that very evening when I was told about the test, I asked for a second one to be done.

REPORTER:

The Rockhampton nurse that was tied to be there understood to be...[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

The nurse in Rockhampton has changed her story multiple times. That's on the record.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, will you apologise to the Blackwater community for the very strong testing requests made to them?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, at that time I endeavoured to be very clear that any link could have been coincidence but we were investigating it. I think those comments were fair.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Not at this stage, no.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I do understand this has been distressing for the Blackwater community and I want to thank them for how cooperative they have been in assisting us. Many. Many of them got tested. I know many of them have been reaching out to support this man's family and his partner and we hope that in the very least, this can provide them some relief that isn't a Covid-19 case in Blackwater.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I might let....Jeanette.

DR YOUNG:

So we establish fever clinics throughout the state when they are required. When they are not required because of the significant numbers of people coming forward then people can go to their local hospital or their GP and be tested.

REPORTER:

Is there a problem with the collection ability especially in Blackwater? It seems extraordinary to have two false positives. Do they not know how to collect the test properly?

DR YOUNG:

There is always going to be a problem collecting a specimen post-mortem. That's always going to be difficult.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, can you explain....I still don't understand how you can get a false positive. You said about the numbers being tested but it doesn't correlated in getting a false positive.

DR YOUNG:

Yes, it's a complicated test. In PRC, it looks for virus particles and it looks for specific viral particles so you can get cross reactivity with other coronaviruses. If you do enough tests, you can end up in a situation where you might get some cross reactivity. It's just the numbers of tests that are being done.

REPORTER:

Are the tests very difficult for analysis?

DR YOUNG:

No, no it's not. Actually, this specific SA that's used is a highly sensitive and a highly specific test but no test is 100 per cent.

REPORTER:

Is that human error? I mean, when it comes out – a piece of paper – is it up for an individual to read the information on it and determine whether it is positive or is it a digital thing?

DR YOUNG:

No, no. So it's read by an expert and that result was sent down to Brisbane and was looked at by one of our most senior microbiologists in the state who agreed with that interpretation.

REPORTER:

Of the positive?

DR YOUNG:

Of the positive, yes. So it was positive at 41 cycles.

REPORTER:

Sorry, did you say that we may never know whether he actually had COVID-19?

DR YOUNG:

That's true. But we've protected the community. So we responded immediately and the community was fantastic in their response. For 605 of them to come forward and be tested, which is more than 10 per cent of their population, is a fantastic response.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, why didn't you say a false positive wasn't a possibility at the time and that further tests would be required to see whether it was absolutely guaranteed?

DR YOUNG:

Because false positives are actually very rare. And we had a result and we had a clinically compatible illness. We had that information from his partner who has been extremely cooperative and helpful with all of this process. So we had those two things, so we went ahead and responded.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible] on the State Government's original roadmap [inaudible] four weeks between [inaudible] can you explain why you don't need those two incubation periods since the May [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So that was a decision made at National Cabinet and it was based on the fact that two weeks would give you a signal, then you need a week to analyse that signal, and then you need a week to put in place. So that's why the four weeks. After two weeks it was very clear that we didn't have a signal after the release of those restrictions, so we felt for Queensland that we could go ahead because we've had so few cases and we would have expected a signal if it had led to any problems.

REPORTER:

Does that mean now in two weeks' time we might have another signal that borders could be reopen sooner, do you think?

DR YOUNG:

So the Premier has said that in two weeks' time National Cabinet intends to discuss the epidemiology from around the country and that's when the Premier will be able to make a decision about what's happening with borders across the country. Because remember, borders are a two-way exchange. We would need to open our borders but the other states would also need to open their borders, and at this point in Australia all borders except for Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT are closed.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So she left Africa on the 28th of May. She travelled through quite a number of countries to get back to Queensland. It wasn't a straightforward flight. And when she came back she was tested and we found she was positive. And she's been in quarantine since she arrived into Queensland.

REPORTER:

On the 28th?

DR YOUNG:

No, she left Africa on the 28th. She took several days to get here.

REPORTER:

Was she symptomatic when she got here?

DR YOUNG:

That's all being looked at at the moment but we believe so, yes.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look it's not our usual practice to tabulate those kinds of expenses and frankly the additional testing done in Blackwater has value to our wider COVID response. It gives us a great level of confidence that there isn't asymptomatic transmission happening in Blackwater and that can help inform our response elsewhere. So right throughout this COVID-19 response we have not spared expense. We have responded strongly and given our officials the tools that they need to keep the community safe, and we make no apologies for that.

REPORTER:


[inaudible] in hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, I think we have to respond rapidly to every positive case and that's precisely what happened here. As you can see, I am upset that this has caused distress to this man's partner and his family but I think given that we had that positive test it was absolutely unavoidable.

[ENDS]

Released under RTIA



Program: Press Conference

Interviewee: Deputy Premier Steven Miles; Sports Minister Mick de Brenni and Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer

Date: 4 June 2020

Duration: 31 minutes 51 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So we're recording zero new cases today, although we are increasing our total by one after a change to the methodology approved by the AHPPC for counting cases and I'll lead the Chief Health Officer to explain that variation, but it means our total is now at 1,060. We are down to just three active cases of COVID-19 in Queensland. A truly incredible result. Two of those are currently in hospital. One is in ICU and they are receiving ventilation. We've now tested 198,292 people. That's an increase of 4416, so close to that target we set ourselves of 200,000 a little time ago.

The Queensland Government is really pleased to welcome the announcement today by Qantas and Jetstar that they will provide 62 additional flights into regional Queensland, intrastate flights into regional Queensland. There is now no excuse, no excuse not to plan your Queensland getaway. The seven new flights into Cairns, seven into Townsville, eight into Rockhampton, seven into Mackay, three to the Whitsundays, right across Queensland you will now be able to fly to some of these tourism hot spots. And if you've never been, now is the time to plan to go. Today it's great to be here at Snap Fitness with the Sport Minister, as well as, of course, our Chief Health Officer, to release the COVID Safe plan for gyms and fitness centres. I know a lot of people have missed their chance to get to the gym through iso life, and so whether you've been hanging out for a spin class, a step class, to get on a tready or to pump some weights, now is the time to get out and do it. It's great exercise, really good for your mental wellbeing, and I know for a lot of people it's a social opportunity as well. Of course, we are still asking you to maintain your social distance, wipe down your gear after you've used it, but that's all the kind of thing that's covered off in this COVID-safe plan. I might ask the Sport Minister to say more about it.

MINISTER de BRENNI:

Well, thanks very much, Steven. The story here today is an incredibly important one, not just because of its health impacts on all of us, but gyms like this one, this Snap Fitness, it might be a big global name, but virtually all of them are owned by small and family businesses. So, a thousand of them across the state. And more important than that is that they employ 8,300 Queenslanders. There's fitness instructors, and on the counter. That means as of today they're back to work. It's a great signal as we work together to unite and recover for Queensland jobs and recover the Queensland economy. I'm incredibly excited and thankful to the Chief Health

Officer for working so collaboratively with the industry across the sport and recreation and fitness sector to get to where we are today so quickly.

When we started isolation, we immediately set up a return-to-play advisory group. And that's led by industry leaders. Industry leaders of sport, fitness, of recreation, athletes themselves, and unions representing workers in sport and recreation, the United Workers' Union. And they have been developing industry COVID-safe plans, and the first cab off the rank is the fitness sector. And I think it is quite poignant that we're here today in this gym. And you can't wipe the smiles off the faces of the staff behind us, that are looking forward to having their clients back, but also having some certainty around their employment security, which is also very, very important. I'm advised as well today that the COVID-safe plan for field sports has also been signed off. That is fantastic news for every sporting club out there that's involved in sports, like football, AFL, rugby league, hockey. That signals the return of Stage 2 training able to occur in a really practical and sensible way, where, with careful measures, with good hygiene, that you can ensure that your club members are able to get back to training, and then later in Stage 3 they'll be back to competitive sport.

It's all been a process of great collaboration between government and industry, between workforce representatives and, of course, the health representatives. As Minister for Sport, I couldn't be happier than to hear the announcement today that gyms are now back open for business, and community sport not far behind. Jeannette?

DR YOUNG:

Thank you very much, Minister. Well, I'm just going to go back to my usual role for a moment. So, physical activity is just critical. So, that message of a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity every single day makes so much difference to the health of people. So, it's great to see gyms open again for business, and I was just having a chat earlier about the people who come here, and on average it's been organised that they can do 50 minutes, and then there's time to clean the place between cohorts, but that 50 minutes is just so critical. So, it will be great when we can have the gyms fully open. And that will happen in the not-far-too-distant future. But this is a really good start. It was great last night, I signed off the first industry plan, and it was the plan for gyms and fitness studios. So, that was good to see. I'm still signing off other industry safe plans as they come through. Hopefully they will all be with me, so they can be signed off for Friday, so people can more fully open in that safe way. So, here in Queensland, we had no new cases overnight, but we did have an additional case to add to our tally. That was someone who was in quarantine and was tested, and by testing their serology, we worked out that they didn't have a current infective case but they had, a few months earlier whilst overseas, been infected and had fully recovered. So, we add it to our case numbers, but it's not a current active case. So, that's really good. So, as we go forward, we know we're managing our cases, and we'll be able to open up society much more as we continue to go forward. But we still have to be very cautious, in that if any of us get sick with any symptoms, and we're seeing more and more cases where people have non-respiratory symptoms, so really, if you have any symptoms, come forward and get tested. Either ring your GP or go to one of the fever clinics, or go to your local hospital. That's very important, because the quicker we find cases, the quicker we can manage them, so we don't end up with a cluster. Thank you.

REPORTER:

The plan for gyms and fitness centres, essentially... [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Again, we need people to cohort in groups of 20. So, in a space like this, they'll be able to create different areas that people gather in that area. Because it's all about the numbers of people you come across. So, if we have one person who's confirmed with COVID-19 that, we can then work out very quickly who they've come into contact with. So, yes, gyms will be able to have more than 20 people, if they follow that industry plan that has now been signed off and is available for people to see and will be in place from midday tomorrow.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, just with the field sports, COVID-safe plan, does that mean players can go down to the local field and play a game of soccer or touch footy? Or is it just training?

DR YOUNG:

No, no. You can have a gathering anywhere of 20 people. But you still need to try and maintain that 1.5 metre distance.

REPORTER:

So, don't tackle?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, non-contact at this time. Remembering that there are contact sports that have been approved to start such as the NRL and they have got processes in place to protect their players and their families and general community. So, they've been able to start contact sports but they are in a quarantine arrangement. But for the general person in the community that can't do that, who has to go about their normal lives, go to work etc, they need to have no-contact sports at the moment.

REPORTER:

Sorry for interrupting. What do you mean by quarantine arrangements? What does that look like for football codes set up for contact?

DR YOUNG:

So they have specific exemptions. So they need to stay in their homes with their families with no visitors. The only reason they can leave their home is to go to training or to play a game, otherwise they are not allowed to go about their normal lives out in the general community. And their medical staff are checking each day whether they or anyone in their family have any symptoms and then their getting tested. So they're essentially in quarantine, except to go to training but everyone else who's going to training is also under that same arrangement or to go and play games and off course this point in time, there are no spectators at the games.

REPORTER:

The test that came back through serology testing [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, we're not, we're doing it when we need it to work out whether something is happening...

REPORTER:

Why is that person?

DR YOUNG:

That person was in quarantine and had symptoms but was negative on PCR, but had had a history of a compatible illness a few months ago while they were overseas, so they thought this was a sensible use of serology and yes the serology confirmed it was probably an earlier case they've recovered from.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Queenslanders keen to get back training with their friends – can you just run through some of the things you will have in place [inaudible] can you go through that plan?

DR YOUNG:

The most important things – and these are general principles for everyone – if you're sick, stay at home. So if you're sick don't go to training, don't go and play games with your friends at the park and so forth, that's the time to just stay at home and get yourself tested. So that's the first thing that applies everywhere. The next one is that when you do go to training or you do go and play community sport that you should try and maintain that distance. So not deliberately come into contact – sometimes accidental contact is going to occur of course – there is a lot of non-contact sports that have quite a bit of accidental contact – but the aim is to not deliberately come into contact. Then it's to minimise the number of people in that group to 20 so that you have 20 people that are playing that sport or participating in that game. So then it's about making it easier for people to be called, contacted so that we can work out who needs to potentially be tested and go into quarantine so that's important. Then, when you play, it's important to think about the space you need. So here in gyms we've put in a requirement that you need one..., each person needs seven square metres which is more than the usual four square metres just because when you're in a gym I hope you're huffing and puffing and blowing out a lot of air, and we know that you need that larger area to be safe. So that's in place at the moment. Outdoors, it's not the same issue because you've got all of that air outdoors so they're one person per four square metres. So when you've got fields and those sort of things. So they're some of the sort of things you should really consider, and don't share things. Don't share exercise mats if you can bring your own, don't share towels, don't share water bottles – all of those sort of things are important to think about. So it's all about trying to if you think about it, trying to maintain social distance from other people so you don't share germs.

REPORTER:

Community sport a couple of questions – Stage Three remains 100 people in an entire venue I think – is this a test to see if there will be further testing in Stage Three?

MINISTER de BRENNI:

I think the whole process that we've seen the Chief Health Officer has rolled out has been about taking it one step at a time, testing it and seeing how things go. And the Health Minister outlined before how the results as a state have been really, really positive. So that's given the Health Officer the confidence to allow those restrictions to ease. The COVID-safe plan for field sports that has been approved today is similar to our gyms; it's really practical – it's about saying okay how can we keep people safe but have more than 20 people in an area. I know that on a rugby league field for instance you would be allowed to have three groups of 20 as long as they don't come into contact with each other and take different routes in and out of the field – that was one of the really big concerns that organisers of community sports and gym operators had – I've got a big precinct, it's got a lot of facilities, I want to maximise access to that – how do I do that? And this COVID-safe industry plan makes it really clear about how they can go about it. So I'm confident that Queenslanders will keep doing the right thing through Stage Two, and when we see Stage Three come about then restrictions will continue to ease and it's going to be great for everybody.

REPORTER:

What about the community clubs who are calling off their A-grade footy comps because 100 people simply isn't enough?

MINISTER de BRENNI:

I think that clubs are making their own decisions about their return to play arrangements consistent with the industry plans that have been outlined. We announced the \$51.3 million support package for sport, and so far we've had just over 2000 clubs take up the initial 2000 grant. And before State Three rolls around we'll open up the equipment and infrastructure grant process to support clubs to improve their revenue. I think though, in the main, I would say over 99 per cent of clubs are ready and raring to go over the next couple of weeks with training, and we'll see them back in the competitions in July.

REPORTER:

Minister, could you run through some of the sports that the average Joe is now allowed to play? Like can they go down and play basketball, can they play soccer?

MINISTER de BRENNI:

I think you can make sure that as long as you're not coming into contact with one another, the training can start. So if your club is ready to go – and that I think is another really important point – clubs are taking their time, just as gyms are taking their time. I know my local gym, they're not going to reopen their doors until the 13th, so they want to work through, making sure that all of the requirements of the industry plan are well organised, their staff know what they're doing, they've educated their members, when they get going everyone will have real confidence. I think a critical part of these industry plans has been sending a message to

people in the community that it is okay to go back out and do these things in that safe way. People have been in isolation for a long time and some people are rightfully nervous about going back out into the community, but they should feel assured that based on the very best health advice, that the time is okay to go back to training in basketball, or netball, rugby league or football. And if you follow the guidelines, you keep in mind everything that the Chief Health Officer has said about hygiene, then we'll all be okay.

REPORTER:

Scott Morrison has said Queensland needs a date in July for the borders to reopen so people can start booking, what are your comments about that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

You've already heard just how successful Queensland has been at containing COVID-19, and it is because of that success that we've been able to open up travel right throughout Queensland, as well as lift these other restrictions. Other states such as New South Wales and Victoria, with more cases, also have more restrictions in place within their borders because they have more cases. It is the success of our border restrictions that has kept those cases out and allowed us to lift these restrictions. Now, we want to lift the border restrictions as soon as we possibly, but safely can, and that is what that assessment at the end of this month, and indeed every month, will tell us whether it is safe to lift those border restrictions. And we are not going to be bullied by Scott Morrison into putting the lives of Queenslanders at risk.

REPORTER:

Surely people in other states, though, need a bit of notice? Can you understand maybe they need a date to commit to so they can book those flights, book the accommodation and come up here?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We've said that that review at the end of the month, the decisions of that review would be implemented, I think, about a week and a half after that. We've been working on similar timeframes throughout. You've got to remember that in Victoria that it is not safe to go to their CBD, so they're seriously standing up and telling us it is safe for them to come to Cairns, but not to go into the Melbourne CBD? Similar restrictions also in New South Wales. So, look, we will work to lift those restrictions as quickly as possible. We know that southerners want to come to Queensland for our fantastic climate, our great beaches, our national parks, the Great Barrier Reef, we want them to come here too, but we want them to come here when it is safe for them and safe for us.

REPORTER:

Are you open to the plan that South Australia is talking about from the 3rd of July, that bubble which would leave out the likes of Victoria and New South Wales?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We'd certainly be willing to discuss with the other states who closed their borders and have managed to suppress and contain the virus, whether we would allow travel between their states

and ours, obviously that is a two-way decision, but we would be very open to have those discussions.

REPORTER:

The other thing is, there's a report around today that part of the reason the border must remain closed is testing rates on the Gold Coast have been quite low and they should reach the number of 1000. Is that true, have you heard that, is that even a metric you guys are considering?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We would certainly like to see higher testing rates. We're a bit of a victim of our own success. There are very few Queenslanders with any symptoms right now, and so it is hard to find people to test. But certainly, if we could get our testing rate up, that would give us more certainty going forward.

REPORTER:

Is the State Government going to administer the federal renovations and grants scheme that was announced overnight?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That is actually probably a better question for Mick to answer, so I'll pass over to him in the moment. But what I've seen of that scheme, it does appear to be incredibly complicated, the people who might be able to access it appears to be very, very limited. But, Mick has looked at it more closely than I have.

REPORTER:

Just before we go to Mick, elective surgeries it says [inaudible] back up to 100 per cent on your elective surgeries but that data is not being released. Why won't you release that data/

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We're back up to targeting 100 per cent. Not all of our health services are back up to 100 per cent activity. Our largest health services – metro north and metro south – are over 100 per cent, which is fantastic. Reporting of those rates was suspended nationally and we will look for a national decision about when we begin reporting again.

REPORTER:

Sorry Deputy Premier, can I just ask, the State Government is imposing a bulk water charge increase – 3.5 per cent from July 1, that is above CPI – given the current economic climate, how does the government even justify that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We've used targeted measures to relieve the financial pressure on households in this very challenging economic climate. The \$200 worth of rebates available to households, most households have now received those, that included \$100 off their water bill. That is the kind

of targeted initiative that we are using to relieve the financial pressure on Queensland families.

REPORTER:

Why not consider a six-month increase, sorry, six month delay to that, given the current economic climate though?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The decision we made was that the best way to relieve the financial pressure on households was that \$200 rebate, and that is what we've implemented.

REPORTER:

On the [inaudible], do you support these pay rises of up to \$68,000 for the top medical physicists [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

These were discussions had between Queensland Health over several years in order to retain what are very highly specialised professionals. In our 100,000-odd staff, about 70 of them work in these roles, and they were being poached by New South Wales. We need these staff to cure and treat cancer and they were being stolen by New South Wales and Victoria – but more so New South Wales – who were willing to pay more. The shortage of these staff is particularly acute in Townsville and on the Sunshine Coast. These discussions were the result of a review in 2018, that was finalised in 2019, the certification of the agreement was delayed while Queensland Health, understandably, dealt with the coronavirus crisis. It does not surprise me that Deb Frecklington and her mate Campbell Newman are out there again today criticising our medical specialists. They fought with them for three years in government, but Deb Frecklington needs to answer to the people of Townsville, we have a new linear accelerator machine in Townsville, one of the first in the southern hemisphere, able to treat and cure cancers that we can not operate without these highly trained professionals. Let me also underline that the total rise figures that have been quoted, I understand will apply to roughly six or seven of those 70 staff. So it is a very small group of highly specialised professionals who we need to be able to save lives.

REPORTER:

What the optics of it? Given you said you were going to freeze pay, could it have been communicated a bit better in that regard, given the Premier came out said its all on hold?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

As I say, these were discussions held by Queensland Health over several years to try to stop New South Wales stealing our medical specialists, it was finalised last year, well before coronavirus hit. But our staff have been understandably very focussed on dealing with COVID-19, and that is why they haven't yet been finalised.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] just on the medical side of it? Why is there such a competition for these types of staff?

DR YOUNG:

They're not medical doctors, they're medical physicists which is a different group, and there is very few of them and they are absolutely critical. So they're a group that is gradually being growing in the need for them over a number of years, and we're not producing enough of them through our universities. But, we're increasing the use of that technology. And yes, I did go up to Townsville and see the new equipment they've got up there, which is highly specialised and is the first of that specific type in the southern hemisphere. It is really cutting edge, so you have to have these particular individuals, and there are not many of them. So, other states are always going to try and recruit them, so we have to make sure that our arrangements are equivalent to other states.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Oh no, they are all through the state. But we know that for some reason we really had problems recruiting to Townsville and the Sunshine Coast. There were just those issues.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, what is the percentage accuracy rate of the COVID-19 tests [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It depends on which platform is being used and which assay is being used, but it is actually very high. We know that there are very few false positives, but if you are testing tens of thousands of cases to only get a few positives because we have got so little disease in our community, which is a very, very good thing, then we know that if you have just got one-in-a-thousand as a false positive, you are going to get them.

REPORTER:

Do you have [inaudible] on that though?

DR YOUNG:

It varies enormously. At the national level, we have asked the relevant body that provides advice to AHPPC, if we could have some further advice.

REPORTER:

Just one for the Deputy Premier on child safety. Will we ever see this before that the [inaudible] the Mason Lee case in the last day or two. Can you explain why the Premier said what she did, and the government's current position?

**DEPUTY PREMIER:**

First of all I would like to say that having read that Coroner's report just reminds me of how horrific that case is and was, how tragic it is, and how sad it makes me that a Queensland child experienced that. The Premier indicated all along that once the Coroner's report was finalised that the review report would be released, and I understand Crown Law are just reviewing whether any of it needs to be redacted to protect identities before it can be released.

REPORTER:

Is it a matter of days, perhaps [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I would expect days, but that is a level of detail that the Attorney-General, the Premier and the Child Safety Minister are working through right now.

REPORTER:

So the government has said it is committed to release it. Will it actually release it?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yes.

ADVISOR:

[inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Do we want to just let Mick say something about renovations?

ADVISOR:

Yes.

MINISTER de BRENNI:

Okay. What was your question [inaudible]?

REPORTER:

Is the State Government going to administer scheme for renovations [inaudible]?

MINISTER de BRENNI:

Well there is not a lot of detail out there about the Morrison Government's HomeBuilder scheme. In fact, we know as much as any other Queenslanders does. We read about it in the paper today as well. But what we do know is that industry has said that they need to see a long-term pipeline of work, and HomeBuilder doesn't quite achieve that. Whilst any investment from the Commonwealth is welcome, we do think that the building industry needs some certainty. I know that there have been calls at a national level. Certainly we have made

it very clear that a scheme that includes certainty for builders and for apprentices is what is needed.

And so we have put on the table a request for investment into a social housing program. That has been an instrument of construction industry recovery in previous economic crises, and I think it should be part of the recovery process in Australia going forward. So, I know the Morrison Government has made some overtures about who should manage this program. We think that there are probably some real complexities in this. We think that it is probably not going to go far enough and it certainly doesn't provide the sort of certainty industry was looking for. It is a good start, but more needs to be done and we look forward to talking to the Commonwealth about that, as well as continuing our discussions here in Queensland about what we can do to ensure that the 250,000 Queensland tradies have certainty about their jobs going forward.

REPORTER:

Does that mean you won't be administering it?

MINISTER de BRENNI:

There hasn't been a conversation with the Queensland Government yet about who will administer it. We have heard some overtures out of Canberra about suggestions that states should administer it, but we have no certainty around that yet. It is a little bit different to the way that National Cabinet has conducted itself to date, which has been around really strong collaboration. This announcement has been made really without any forewarning to states.

REPORTER:

Thank you.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Minister Leeanne Enoch and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 6 June 2020

Duration: 31 minutes 30 seconds

E&OE

MINISTER ENOCH:

Happy Queensland Day and what a fantastic weekend to take up an opportunity to go camping in our national parks. Since the Premier's announcement last weekend, we saw the lifting of restrictions around camping and national parks, we've seen an overwhelming response from Queenslanders to go and engage in our beautiful national parks. In fact, this weekend alone we have 1156 campers that are in our national parks enjoying that open space this weekend. And since we've opened the bookings, we've had nearly 6000 camping bookings and more than 2500 vehicle access permits that have been issued since those bookings have been opened. And of course, this is the best time to be able to go camping in Queensland, during the winter months, and it is a great way to be able to support tourism right across our great state. And in fact, right here at Walkabout Creek, the Palaszczuk Government has invested \$1.3 million in some new infrastructure, to our left, the fantastic new deck to be able to enjoy this incredible national park. And this is part of a \$45 million commitment from the Palaszczuk Government to upgrade infrastructure across our very popular national parks so that more and more Queenslanders can enjoy our beautiful open spaces. And of course, during the COVID-19 period, I think more Queenslanders than ever have really come to appreciate the great lifestyle that we have, the great environment that we have and now is the time to be able to go out and enjoy it. But of course, to be very clear, it has always been the case that you must make a booking and get a permit to be able to camp in national parks, that has not changed. So, make sure you visit the website and get out there and enjoy our beautiful open spaces. Any questions?

REPORTER:

[inaudible] the protests planned for today, both in solidarity for the US and also for justice for the 432 indigenous deaths in custody here in Australia?

MINISTER ENOCH:

Yes, let me just say this. Whether you're talking about the US, or you're talking about right here in Australia, black lives matter. Black lives matter today, black lives matter every day. It is not just about turning up for one day, it is about turning up every day in your families, in your workplace, in your community to tell the truth, to confront the truth, the sometimes uncomfortable truth of our shared history. It is about turning up everyday to accept and acknowledge that those sometimes uncomfortable, ugly truths are the foundation for the

pervasive, persistent inequality that first nations people experience in this country. And it is about turning up every day committed to reconciling those things, and forging a powerful path of a united, inclusive Australia. If we are able to turn up everyday, we will be able together make this country a better place for everybody.

REPORTER:

Minister, are you having any concerns just with the social distancing, that [inaudible] turning up today?

MINISTER ENOCH:

Obviously, we're living in a really extraordinary time. COVID-19 puts a lot of pressure on many of us, but that is a burden that we all have to bear. Particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the risk is really high. So, of course those who have decided to participate today, the message is really clear: be very sensible, follow the rules, socially distance, stay within 20 people in terms of the groups that you're with, and take every precaution. But as I've already said, it is not just about standing up for one day, it is about standing up every day.

REPORTER:

Do you back the Premier's call for people to stay home?

MINISTER ENOCH:

Certainly there will be people who are at risk and it would not be wise for them to participate in large group activities, as has been organised today. For those people, again, I give you this message: It is not just about turning up for one day, it is about turning up every day, and everyday we can continue to have our words spoken, we can continue to have the conversations about our shared history, we can continue to have the conversations about how we want this nation to look and feel for everybody into the future.

REPORTER:

Do people [inaudible]?

MINISTER ENOCH:

The police have made some comments on this, and I would refer you to those comments.

REPORTER:

People have been banned from attending their loved ones funerals, the borders have been closed the economy is crippled. Why wouldn't the government do anything to prevent people from gathering in their thousands in the middle of the city?

MINISTER ENOCH:

Let me just say this, there is a great deal of... many Queenslanders, all Queenslanders have made incredible sacrifices to smash the curve here in our state, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know full well what sacrifice means. There are many families, as you say, including indigenous families who have had to break cultural practices to adhere to the

COVID-19 restrictions, and they've made those sacrifices. So for those who today are staying at home, or who are turning up in a different way, I want everybody to understand that we all recognise the sacrifices that everybody has made.

REPORTER:

Are we now allowed to gather in thousands?

MINISTER ENOCH:

The Chief Health Officer is here, and of course the Chief Health Officer has made it really clear about her recommendations, her guidelines, her directions with regards to gatherings. So we are now allowed to gather to up to 20 people in public.

REPORTER:

There's going to be thousands here today.

MINISTER ENOCH:

And that has been made very clear that if for those who do decide to be part of today's activities, that you must take every possible precaution to gather only in groups of 20 and to socially distance, and to take those precautions. That is really important, but as I've said already, this issue of black lives matter, and let's be clear, black lives do matter. This issue is not just about turning up for one day, it is about turning up every day on these issues, and standing up for what is right, not just in the US, but here in Australia here too.

REPORTER:

You put a \$200 million stop order on Land House late last week, is there room to negotiate [inaudible]?

MINISTER ENOCH:

There has been numerous conversations between Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government with regards to that particular property. I have issued a stop work order to ensure that it is not demolished. It is unfortunate that it took a while for Brisbane City Council to notify the Queensland Government of the impending demolition, or part demolition of the building. But as soon as we were informed, I acted immediately to issue that stop work order. There have been, as I said, negotiations between the Brisbane City Council and Queensland Government for some years with regards to the issues of Land House, they will continue, but ultimately a property that is cultural heritage listed property, there are responsibilities that the owner must take to ensure that it is upheld and upkept and we will stand by that.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I love being Health Minister, but there are some days that I miss being able to do my press conferences in our wonderful national parks, and isn't this just a beautiful setting, and it is wonderful to hear from Minister Enoch that lots and lots of Queenslanders are getting out and enjoying our national parks this weekend. That is exactly what we want people to do, go out, enjoy Queensland, we have an incredible state. Spend some money at a local business, support other Queenslanders who are employing Queenslanders. Today, we have one new

case of COVID-19 to advise you of, bringing our total number of cases to 1061. That is four active cases within the state, two of those in hospital, one in intensive care. In the last reporting period, we tested 3391 people, bringing our total number of tests to 205,628 individual Queenslanders tested for COVID-19. With regards to this new case, we are going to provide you with what information we have to hand right now. It is very recent, the positive test is very recent and so I would urge you to understand that our understanding of the facts might change over time. We do our best to share as openly and transparently with you, and through you to Queenslanders, but we can't help the fact that early information might not prove to be the case as we move forward. What we understand is that a gentleman from Melbourne, who had been in contact with a known case of COVID-19 case in Melbourne – now you have to remember there is a lot more active cases of COVID-19 in Victoria, and particularly in Melbourne than there is in Queensland – he travelled to Brisbane on his way to Bundaberg to pick fruit in Bundaberg. He stopped overnight in Brisbane and socialised with family and friends, we understand roughly 15 contacts on the southside of Brisbane before he travelled to Bundaberg. He was transported by his fruit picking employer to fruit picker accommodation where he has worked a shift picking fruit and been in contact with a number of people. So, clearly there is a lot of work here for our contact tracers to do. There is two flights, there is those contacts Brisbane who will now need to be tested and quarantined, there is those who travelled on the transport from Bundaberg Airport and those accommodated in the share accommodation as well as those who might have been working with him on the farm. So, our contact tracers are rapidly working to contact all of those people identified who might be at risk and contact them. But the important thing is not to wait for a phone call. If you are in any of these places, and you get any symptoms, if you feel unwell in anyway at all, please do go and get tested. What this case underlines for me is the risks associated with people travelling, particularly from Victoria into Queensland. We are able to respond rapidly because this is just one case. But you've had politicians out week after week, irresponsibly calling for our borders to be opened. Irresponsibly calling for thousands of people to come, and if you just imagine the risks that that would put to Queensland's health and to our economy, you would understand why it is crucial that we keep those restrictions in place. Finally, there is some more reporting today about our efforts to work with our stadiums to get people watching sport, and we are working really closely with them to find a way that we can get people back watching the footy, that is what we want, it won't be the same, we're even talking about maybe bringing back the kegs on legs, so that people can get their beer delivered to them in their seats. We're working through all of that detail with the stadiums and we hope to have people back watching the football really soon.

REPORTER:

Do you think it might be, a stage thing with the stadiums, you know a certain number of time and then increase it?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yes, that is certainly what we're talking with the stadiums about. I am sure the first time we will have a very low capacity, and then we will be able to expand it, it is all about keeping people in their seats as much as possible, managing the arrival and departures so that you

don't have crunches of people. Managing toilets, food service, drinks, it is quite complicated but there are ways that we can do that. We believe there are ways that we can do that safely.

REPORTER:

Is there any indication on timing for that, Minister?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We have these meetings during the week, we've only just gone to gatherings of 20, so we will continue to work through with them, but I would hope that we would have something in place, if not before stage three, at the same time as we go to stage three.

REPORTER:

What sort of farm was he working at?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I might let the Chief Health Officer just give you some more details, and then take those questions.

REPORTER:

Minister, another question if you don't mind?


DEPUTY PREMIER:

I am happy to come back.

DR YOUNG:

We had one new case overnight in Queensland, and it is a case that travelled from Melbourne up into Queensland while infectious. So we do now need to rapidly contact trace the people on that flight, and then the people that he stayed with in Brisbane, he took overnight, two days in Brisbane on his way up to Bundaberg. He flew into Bundaberg, so we will need to contact trace the people on that flight again, and contact trace the people who he shares the accommodation with in Bundaberg. We have so far received four tests back from the people that he shares accommodation with in Bundaberg and they've been negative. I am waiting on a whole range of other tests to come back later today for other contacts. But it is really, really important that people who live in Brisbane or in Bundaberg don't wait for a phone call from a contact tracer. If you've got any symptoms, now is the time to immediately go and get tested. We know he was infectious on the Monday when he flew into Brisbane, and today we're not five, six days later, so now is when people will start showing symptoms. We also know that you're infectious for up to 48 hours before you have symptoms. So there will be people out in our communities in Bundaberg and Brisbane today who don't know that they have it, who could potentially be spreading the infections. So, this is a time for heightened alertness for all our population in Brisbane and Bundaberg. Although my message of course doesn't change. It doesn't matter where you are in Queensland, if you develop any symptoms, fever or history of fever, it is important to immediately ring your GP or go to a fever clinic, or your local hospital and get tested, and to isolate yourself until you get that result.

REPORTER:



What sort of farm is he working on?

DR YOUNG:

A strawberry farm.

REPORTER:

And how old is this man?

DR YOUNG:

He is in his 20s.

REPORTER:

When did the flights take place?

DR YOUNG:

On Monday, and then on Tuesday. We have the flight details so I can give them to you.

REPORTER:

Monday from Melbourne to Brisbane, Tuesday from Brisbane to Bundaberg?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, Virgin flights, but we've got the specific flight numbers, so if we could get that information out. We will be putting out a public health alert for those two flights, and asking people who have been on those flights to ring 13 HEALTH.

REPORTER:

What happens with that farm? Is it shut down, or what happens? There is a concern with concern with coronavirus and fruit.

DR YOUNG:

No, there is absolutely no concern for the strawberries, so it is perfectly safe today to purchase strawberries from anywhere and to consume it. There is no issue there. In terms of the farm, the farm has been extremely cooperative, we've stood up a testing clinic there and we are testing farm workers there this morning.

REPORTER:

What is the name of the farm?

DR YOUNG:

I don't have that, sorry.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] there is no issue with that in terms of border restrictions. He was allowed to fly for work, is that right?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, so he is seasonal worker, so there are exemptions under the restrictions for seasonal workers, we needed to, and we still need to keep our agriculture going in Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] to know where you might actually look at testing people coming off planes, does this raise that need to do that again?

DR YOUNG:

No it doesn't. This is one case. So, we don't need to test every single person who comes off a plane. But it is important that everyone considers if they've got any symptoms that that is when they should be tested.

REPORTER:

What is your opinion on these protests this afternoon?

DR YOUNG:

My opinion is yesterday we had very, very little risk because we had three active cases in Queensland. Today the risk has increased because we do have another active case, and I am not quite sure where that person has been. So, it is really, really important that people maintain social distancing. And the same message as always, if you're unwell, you've got any symptoms, don't attend, that is very important, you really must stay away. If you're well, then of course attend but maintain social distance and maintain that limitation of 20, because then if we do have any groups out there, and if someone is infectious and goes into that group of 20, they've limited it then to 20 people. So, I would not want people to breach those requirements and to move between multiple groups because then we just spread the risk.

REPORTER:

How realistic is that, though? I mean this is a rally after all with people mingling, how realistic is it to actually maintain social distancing?

DR YOUNG:

It is very realistic, and Queenslanders to date have been fantastic in following all of the directions and requirements. And again, I am just asking Queenslanders to follow those directions. So, to maintain social distancing and to stay within groups of 20 and if you're sick, stay home, please don't attend. If you become sick anytime, please get tested.

REPORTER:

Are you concerned of a possible outbreak from this large gathering of people?

DR YOUNG:

Any outbreak can always occur, that is why we're doing everything that we're doing. Today our focus is to contact trace everyone that this man who has flown into Queensland has been with.

REPORTER:

If people are gathering in their thousands at the protest why can't they go to the footy?

DR YOUNG:

But they will be – we've already started that process so our stadiums in Queensland; they're one of the first in the country to re-open for football...and we've started spectators already, we'll increase those numbers. I had a very, very productive meeting last week with stadiums and managers so we're starting that work. It will happen.

REPORTER:

Just one for the Deputy Premier...China has issued a travel warning for its citizens saying to not travel to Australia because of increased racism with coronavirus – what do you make of that? Is that a concern?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well first of all the impact of that is likely to be minimal given that our international borders are currently closed. But what I would say to our Chinese community and indeed people in China who might want to travel here down the track is that Australia is a very safe country. We are not a racist country. We embrace people from all cultures, and we can't wait until you can come back here to enjoy our wonderful environment, to send your children to our fantastic universities and of course our ongoing trade relationship is incredibly important. Agriculture and resources exports are really what has sustained our economy throughout this, and of course much of them going to Asia.

REPORTER:

How unhelpful is it that the Chinese [inaudible] is using tourism as a political weapon?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It's not going to make much practical difference right now because our borders are closed and are likely to be closed for some time. But I really want to address the underlying perception here because it is not the case that racism is widespread against Asians in our country. Indeed, when we saw some outbursts of that early on there was a massive outpouring of support for our Chinese community and I would just continue to express that support on behalf of the Queensland Government.

REPORTER:

Just with the rally Minister, was there any consideration given just in light of [inaudible] a coronavirus case to actually stop people from going ahead with that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We are a free society where we have a long tradition of people being able to speak their minds, express their political viewpoints...that's particularly important in Queensland where that was suppressed for a very, very long time. What we have said here is that we would prefer people not to go and express their protests in other ways. But if they do go, then the health

advice that we have consistently provided remains the same – that is that they should keep 1.5 metres distance between groups. And if they can do that, then they can do that safely.

REPORTER:

So why then shouldn't people be allowed to go and grieve in numbers of 10 or 20 at a loved one's funeral.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think at funerals we are not at 50. We currently allow people to have 50 people at a funeral. Funerals are high risk events – they involve people travelling great distances – it is very hard to tell people they can't hug and kiss at a funeral, and they then return back to their communities. That's why those restrictions have been in place. They have been very hard – very hard – to sustain. There has been a lot of requests for exemptions and I know Jeannette has sat up late at night considering all of those. But it's very difficult to have that kind of social distancing at a funeral.

REPORTER:

A lot of people are wondering how you can allow thousands of people to turn up to protest, but you can't allow more than 50 people to go to a funeral. Even if you ask them not to hug and kiss.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well in a lot of ways this is not unlike what we would say about a shopping centre or a park. People can be at parks, having picnics...there could be thousands in big parks like the gardens so long as they maintain those social distancings. I want to point something else out too. Last weekend, there was a protest of anti-vaxxers and people who thought that coronavirus was caused by 5G. Now there was no-where near this level of outcry about that protest as there has been about this one.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] A different question on the Queensland Greats List – have you had a chance to look at it? Is there any stand outs? The Morecombe's or...?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I haven't had a look but of course there are many, many great Queenslanders...the Morecombe's of course are very, very worthy. Some of the other names I saw are very worthy as well.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] The seasonal worker that has come to Queensland – there has been a whole week of very, very difficult tasks to trace all those people who that person has been in contact with for a week.

DR YOUNG:

It's the only active case that's new for us, so we have a lot of resources that we can now pour into this. There will be a lot of people that will need to be contact traced – well over 50. But we have the resources to do it. What concerns me of course is how many of those sorts of case could we manage. If we start to go back to the day when we had 80 cases like that – that was really difficult back in March. Today we have one so I'm absolutely confident that we will be able to contact trace every single person. But I remind people don't wait for that phone call from a contact tracer. If you've got symptoms today, go and get tested today.

REPORTER:

Is there any idea on how far these people have come into contact with them, given they are seasonal workers and might've travelled in that time, or had they been on the one farm the whole time?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, so that's part of what those contact tracers are doing. So they've of course already tested the four other people in the shared accommodation with him, and they've all come back negative which is very good. And then they've set up a clinic at the farm that he worked that one shift at, and they're testing people there this morning. And we should get those results later today.

REPORTER:

A question for both Minister Miles and Minister Enoch. Do you think the Queensland Government has done enough to stop black deaths in custody?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Minister Enoch spoke powerfully about that, so I might allow her to address that...

REPORTER:

Before you go Minister I have another question about the Mackay matter...

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Okay can we do...sorry I think this is...

MINISTER ENOCH:

Well thanks very much for that question, and I think that's a question that needs to be asked of every jurisdiction in Australia. There has been many decades now since the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, and since then as it has been reported many times, more than 400 First Nations peoples have lost their lives in custody. In Queensland we have been accelerating our efforts in regards to treaties. We have moved in terms of expanding our reconciliation plans, and of course these are fundamental steps for us to be able to find ways forward. But it is the acceptance of truth telling that we must have in place and that is what the Queensland Government has been engaged in. Truth telling. Right now for the first time in history, there are three First Nations people who have places in the Queensland Parliament. And we have committed ourselves to the act of truth telling and to ensuring that the Queensland Government continues down a path of working towards

ensuring that the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody continue to be at the forefront of our thinking in the years to come.

REPORTER:

What's your understanding of this report into the death of an infant in Mackay. Were they known to the department?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I haven't heard anything beyond those media reports. Clearly it is now a police matter and will be investigated by them.

REPORTER:

With each day, about 14...10-14 cases of COVID-19 are reported in Victoria. Is it possible if those numbers remain high that the borders will remain closed past September?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look as we've said all along. We will assess that situation with the virus both here in Queensland and in other states at the end of each month and makes those decisions. That next review is due at the end of June, and I really do hope that we see a reduction in community transmission in those other states so we can see those restrictions lifted. But as I said before this case underlines just how important it is to our efforts to suppress the virus here that we don't go importing the virus from other states. This is just one case, and as the Chief Health Officer said we're well equipped to respond to one case. But if we began having thousands of people coming here for their holidays then we would greatly amplify that risk and the amount of work we would have to do to contact everyone who may've been in touch with virus.

REPORTER:

What would that number have to get to in order to be satisfied for the borders to open?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The crucial number – and I might get Jeannette to add to this – but the crucial number is the amount of community-based infections and particularly those that can't be traced back to a know case. And they're the two numbers that we'll be monitoring closely, continue to monitor closely. The National Cabinet will be receiving a special report on the epidemiology of the virus in each of the states at their next meeting I understand, and that will be very, very useful to us.

DR YOUNG:

As the Deputy Premier has said, National Cabinet is receiving the epidemiology of the virus from across the country next Friday when they next week. And then we'll be using that information because it is important that we know what is happening across the country and what is happening with borders across the country. A border has a two-way flow so we know that the majority of borders in our country today are closed. So Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania and Queensland's borders are all closed to other

states today. It is only New South Wales and Victoria and of course A.C.T in the midst of New South Wales who have their borders open.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Have Victorian authorities been alerted to this [inaudible] Melbourne seasonal worker?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we have spoken to the Victorian health authorities about this case because they now need to go and contact trace his contacts that he had when he was infectious in Melbourne.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank-you.

MINISTER ENOCH:

Thanks guys.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Program: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Steven Miles, Deputy Premier

Holly Marsters, CEO McGrath Foundation

Dr Jeanette Young, Chief Health Officer

Di Farmer, Minister for Child Safety

Date: 10 June 2020

Duration: 30mins 53sec

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Good morning. Today we're making an announcement about the continuation of a very special partnership. The Queensland Government has recommitted to our partnership with the McGrath Foundation. An investment of \$2.4 million over three years so that they can continue to employ seven of their special breast cancer care nurses. One in seven Queensland women will experience breast cancer in their lifetime which means most of us will know a woman who will be diagnosed with breast cancer and these special nurses will be there with them, with women right across Queensland through their diagnosis, their treatment, hopefully their recovery, their tears and sadly sometimes their deaths. And I can't think of a more appropriate investment or a better way to deliver that care than through our partnership with the McGrath Foundation. Holly is here from the McGrath Foundation and is available to talk to what these funds mean.

HOLLY MASTERS:

Thank you Deputy Premier. Hi. My name's Holly, I'm the CEO of the McGrath Foundation. We are exceptionally grateful for this partnership with the Queensland Government. We have 22 specialist McGrath breast cancer nurses across Queensland and this partnership means that seven of them will be fully funded over the next three years. It's an incredible thing that they do. Supporting not just the women with breast cancer but some men who also have the diagnosis and their families and their loved ones. It's an incredibly tough time, you can imagine right now, during COVID-19 this pandemic is fuelling a huge amount of anxiety particularly when they have just got that diagnosis. So the role of the nurse is to really support them both emotionally, psychologically and in terms of their physical wellbeing. It makes a huge amount of difference to them. It keeps them out of hospital. It keeps them healthy and it enables them to live their best lives. To spend the time doing things that they love with their families. So we're hugely grateful for this partnership. \$2.4 million over three years is a substantial commitment. We need to raise \$14 million every year to fund out existing nurses across the country before we even attempt to close the gap for people who do

not have that support. So this is a huge step to making sure that those diagnosed with breast cancer in Queensland have the support that they deserve and that they need. Thank you.

DR YOUNG:

This is excellent news this morning hearing about these additional nurses who will support women who've been diagnosed with breast cancer. That is always an extremely difficult time for a woman and her family. I would also like to remind Queensland women that BreastScreen services are now available. So it's very important that if you're due for your screen that you ring up and make an appointment. You can either call or you can go online and find an appointment time that suits you. We have services that provide extended hours so that they are convenient. This is a time that we have to think about our general health as well as health due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is really important that all of us don't stop doing all of that extremely important preventive work. You still need to make sure that you're managing your high blood pressure, your heart disease and your risk of breast cancer. Thank you.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So I'm happy to give a COVID-19 update. The Chief Health Officer and I are happy to take questions on that. The Child Safety Minister is here also and available to take questions on other matters currently in the news cycle.

There are zero further cases of COVID-19 in Queensland overnight. Another zero day for Queensland leaving our total number of cases at 1062. Just three of those cases remain active. One is in hospital receiving ventilation in intensive care on the Gold Coast. We have now tested 219,095 Queenslanders including 5137 in the last testing period, meeting that goal that we set ourselves of testing 5000 Queenslanders a day. Of course, it's fantastic to see that. In the last week across the country there have been seven cases believed to be locally acquired. Six of those in Victoria. One in Queensland although that case acquired their infection in Victoria. There are currently 44 people in Queensland in quarantine due to their contact with that case who travelled with the virus to Queensland from Victoria. I might ask the Chief Health Officer if she has anything to add.

DR YOUNG:

So no new cases overnight in Queensland which is excellent news. And thank you to those more than 5000 Queenslanders who came forward yesterday to be tested. I hope that we continue that. I'd love to see more than 5000 Queenslanders tested every single day. It is so important. If you have any symptoms no matter how mild or a fever or a history of a fever that you immediately isolate yourself and get tested. That's important for you because we know that if we start treatment for people with the supportive services that we have available to us here in our health system in Queensland as soon as possible it is better for that individual. It is then better for their family and better for the community. So please, every single Queenslanders, come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]



DR YOUNG:

Yes, so we only have one active case in hospital today in Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

For a while yes, that's correct. I'm not sure of the full length of time but yes, they've been there a while. We do know that some people who require intensive care can be intensive care for months. But it's really important that they go into intensive care as soon as that is needed.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, they're all well. We will continue to, of course, follow up with each one of those 44 people. So we have people here in Brisbane in quarantine plus we have people in Bundaberg and we have people in quarantine who are close contacts on the flight with the gentleman.

REPORTER:

We have just three active cases now. We're not out of it yet but compared to those numbers we were seeing [inaudible]...how does that make you feel to see three?

DR YOUNG:

It is very reassuring but it also shows that every single Queenslanders has played their part. And the most important part they've played is to willing come forward and get tested. We know that we have very little of the virus circulating but every single case can immediately lead to an enormous number of other cases. One case that travelled up from Victoria has lead to 44 Queenslanders having to go into quarantine for two weeks and I've very grateful to those 44 Queenslanders that they're prepared to do that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Clearly businesses have suffered because of the global economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I think every part of the global economy has suffered and clearly that includes businesses in Queensland and in the tourism industry they have suffered the worst.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...border closures have really affected businesses on the Gold Coast.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Restrictions on travel have clearly affected them but those restrictions on travel existed at a number of levels. There is a restriction on people crossing our national borders from other countries. There are restrictions from travel from Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory. Until very recently, residents of New South Wales and Victoria were restricted from travelling also. So it's very difficult to differentiate which of those restrictions have caused what losses.

REPORTER:

What's the Government's [inaudible] for closing the borders and [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Closing the borders kept Queenslanders safe. We have just three active cases now thanks to all of our efforts including closing the borders. We closed those borders when we saw a concerning increase in the number of cases coming to Queensland from New South Wales and Victoria. That was the right decision. We made the right decision. That has kept Queenslanders safe. Queensland now has just three active cases. We have had one of the best responses in the world to this virus. Clearly that has had economic impact but I would argue we are now in the best place to unite and recover going forward because we are now not facing a massive outbreak of local transmission of COVID-19. So the decisions we took were purely motivated by the desire to keep Queenslanders safe and that is what we did.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well it hasn't argued that. What has been reported in the paper this morning is the initial preliminary response to claims being made in a court. Those initial response lists those facts that can be agreed as stated and those facts that cannot be agreed as stated and need to be explored by the court and that is precisely what the court will go on to do. They are very initial pleadings. If you read through them, they accept some things as fact. For example, that Mount Ommaney is in Queensland and then say other matters need to be explored between the parties and the court.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think that's unlikely today. The codes are permitted under the current stadium and codes plans to have small numbers of their core executive sponsors, those kinds of people and I understand they may be permitted to attend the AFL this weekend but in terms of larger crowds which has been foreshadowed by one of the codes, that may not be in until sometime down the track.

REPORTER:

Can you confirm that the pay freeze legislation will be debated next week?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I expect that the government will continue to work through with unions and agencies how that wage freeze will apply in different agencies and no doubt the responsible ministers will have more to say about that between now and next week.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I understand that is accurate. Our hospitals right across the state recruited to surge up levels in anticipation to what we thought would be the COVID-19 pandemic curve. Off course that curve hasn't happened. One of the areas where we staffed up in a lot of hospitals was cleaning staff because infection control requires a higher degree of intensive cleaning. Clearly, we aren't going to require that level of cleaning staff that we thought that we modelled that we would and therefore a number of casual and temporarily engaged cleaning staff have been released. A further number have been retained in the casual pool at the Gold Coast but that's precisely what I think you would expect. We put up surge up staffing levels to prepare for the pandemic and now as that has not occurred, while we maintain a state of readiness, we don't need that level of staff standing by for something that we don't anticipate will happen at least at the moment.

REPORTER:

Is that state wide?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The decision is made by hospital by hospital and health service by health service. I am aware of that situation on the Gold Coast and can get you those numbers on the Gold Coast but you would expect to see things like that happen at out other hospitals as we attempt to return as much as possible to a state of normal activity whilst also retaining our readiness for Covid-19 outbreak.

REPORTER:

Were you disappointed... [Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think the COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyone's plans about everything and while the Parliamentary Committee do very important work and heard really important and in some cases harrowing testimony from Queenslanders about their experiences and their families experiences at end-of-life. With the limited time available now before the election, I think it was most appropriate that we asked the Law Reform Commission to provide their expert advice. That process worked really well in the termination of the Pregnancy Bill and ultimately saw that Bill pass with some pretty strong support. I hope personally as a supporter of that reform that we see that occur but off course my number one focus and priority has been this year and continues to be, leading the states health response to COVID-19, while the



Government's focus is on the economic recovery now that we have largely dealt with the first wave of the pandemic.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Governing is always about priorities and using your time and resources on those priorities and clearly when we learned that this pandemic was set for our shores, our priorities changed and I think all Queenslanders, even those who feel very strongly about that issue would appreciate that the focus of our health system, the focus of the experts who we would want to be calling upon to advise on those laws, that debate and how to implement them, they've all been focused, all of our available resources have been focused on the COVID-19 response. So it would have been very, very difficult for us to provide those experts to the kind of informed debate that I would like to see on that particular question. Let me emphasise though, that none of this has delayed our implementation of better support for palliative care services. We've continued to roll out additional funds for HHS's, for hospitals based, health service based and community based palliative care services. We've heard what the community has said and what the Parliamentary Committee about how important it is to resource first palliative care.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I know that there are a few COVID-Safe plans with my staff that they are going through at the moment. All of the others have been signed off.

REPORTER:

How long will it take?

DR YOUNG:

They are going through them today.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I haven't received.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

So we are going through all of the plans for those individual stadiums at the moment.



REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, it's going through the plans that those individual stadiums are putting together.

REPORTER:

When do you expect to step up for...[Inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

That will be when I receive them.

REPORTER:

When can we see crowds in stadiums?

DR YOUNG:

Those are the plans that we are going through at the moment.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

When those people have put together those plans, I've given them some principles for them to consider when they are putting together those plans. Then I'll be able to comment.

REPORTER:

The Brisbane Lions...[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It's about the stadium. So yes, the AFL did put forward their plans and their plans included no spectators. So they were the initial plans that I signed off for each of those football codes. Now there's a different planning process for the stadiums because the stadiums will be open for any football codes, not just the AFL.

REPORTER:

Is the primary plan for the stadiums to be self-managed?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, yes.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible]

MINISTER FARMER:

I want to say a few words. Last week, the Deputy Coroner released a report into the death of Mason Jet Lee. It was a report that on reading would have made anyone sick to the stomach to think of the details of that little boys life and death. Yesterday in Parliament, three reports were tabled. One by the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health, investigations into the health system at the time of Mason Jet Lee's death and I tabled two reports.

One, an external child death review panel report and an internal report into the systems and practices of the Department of Child Safety t the time of Mason Jet Lee's death. These follow the additional review by the Queensland Family and Child Commissioner and that report was released at the time. These reports have been made public because we appreciate that there is enormous public interest in this case. There is enormous sadness amongst our community at seeing the details of Mason's life and the public want to know that Mason did not die in vain.

These reports are undertaken so that we can identify comprehensively what needed to happen to make sure that our system was strong enough to protect children like Mason in the future. Of the 16 recommendations that were made across the three child safety related reports, all 16 recommendations were met and were accepted. These reports are also upsetting. They are frank and honest in their detail of the systems at the time. There were systems that simply wasn't good enough to save Mason Jet Lee. They were a system that was in place four years ago and we have used those recommendations to improve what we do in child safety to keep our kids safe.

We have a budget of \$1.3 billion in Child Safety this year, and by the end of next year we will have employed 500 additional staff. Our Child Safety officers work day-in and day-out to keep our most vulnerable kids safe. The best place for a child is in a loving family, but if that family is not willing and able to look after their child then our officers, who are sometimes faced with the depths of depravity, our officers do their best to make sure that that child is safe.

REPORTER:

Why weren't any Child Safety officers fired?

MINISTER FARMER:

There were... 12 Child Safety officers were investigated by the Ethical Standards Unit and recommendations were made about disciplinary action. Three of those staff left of their own accord. What these reports make clear is that although the staff, there were individual circumstances surrounding all of those staff, that they were staff operating in a system which was simply not enough. Not enough to save Mason's life. And both reports paint a picture of a system which needed massive reform, and that is in fact what we have done.

REPORTER:

Is the system enough now to prevent more child deaths?

MINISTER FARMER:

The system, the Child Safety system and the in the Coroner's report and in the reports that you will see tabled yesterday paint a picture of a Child Safety system which is common across the world – enormously complex and facing increasing demand. We receive over

120,000 calls a year about children potentially at risk of harm. That is one call every four minutes. Last year alone we had a 10 per cent increase in the number of children requiring a 24-hour response because of the critical risk of harm. We have invested, by the end of next year, almost 500 additional staff. The Child Safety budget for this year alone is \$1.3 billion.

There are a whole series of recommendations from those reviews. And I can tell you this Department had to lay itself bare. It had to learn some things about itself that were not pretty, and we had to improve on those because our kids depend on us. So, have we invested in the Child Safety system? Yes. Have we made major reforms? Yes. Do we face enormous demand, enormous increase in complexity? Yes. And that is what we work every day to counteract. That is what we work every day to keep our kids safe.

REPORTER:

Minister, you say that the system only now bears no resemblance to the one that saw Mason Lee killed. What other absolute main things that you point to as evidence for sweeping reform gripping your Department?

MINISTER FARMER:

When you read the internal report yesterday into the systems and practices at the time, you see a workforce that was desperately understaffed, that did not cater for demand. In Caboolture at the time, 12 per cent of the state's Child Safety concern reports were focused in that area. There were clearly not enough staff to deal with the demand around the state. We have committed by the end of next year 500 additional staff. We know that all of the different government Departments dealing with children at risk of harm were simply not working in a system that allowed them to share information.

We were the first state to introduce, to legislate for information sharing so that private information could be shared across government systems. We have made massive changes to the way Child Protection workers work with domestic violence victims now. There has been enormous change. We were the first state in Australia to put in place a system of permanency for children, saying that every child deserves the Forever Family. And every single child, from the minute we start working with them, there has to be a plan for how we make sure they have a stable life until they are 18 years of age. We have made enormous legislative change. We have made enormous investment. We have put in those additional staff. We announced a \$100 million action on ice because we know that over one third of the children who now need to be taken into care have one or both parents addicted to ice. In some regions it is over 50 per cent of the parents are addicted to ice. And most of those children are under five years of age. So enormous reform.

REPORTER:

Are you aware of any of your staff being referred to an ethics investigation on how to be disciplinary [inaudible] in relation to Willow Dunn [inaudible]?

MINISTER FARMER:

As you know, I am unable to comment on whether those young people were known to Child Safety. But those matters have been referred to the Queensland Family and Child

Commissioner because the important think that needs to come out of tragic incidents like that is that we understand what happened. And that is what the Queensland Family and Child Commissioner is going to deliver. I know that she is well into her investigations. And we have made it clear that aside from where the report may identify confidential details about children or siblings or family members, that that report will be made public.

So the important thing is that when those terrible things happen, and I don't think anything affects us more than we hear of children suffering or dying. There is just nothing that affects us more than that. So the important thing is we need to know how did those incidents happen. How did Willow's death happen, and what more could have been done to save her life. So that will be made public in the Commissioner's report.

REPORTER:

Are you referring of any specific cases? Like, is there any [inaudible] at the moment? And has any disciplinary action been taken with staff over the past month?

MINISTER FARMER:

I am sorry. I am just not able to make any statements which would indicate one way or the other whether those young people were known to Child Safety.

REPORTER:

Minister, what is the average turnover of staff in the Department? And, I guess, what does the Department do to retain staff when they become [inaudible]?

MINISTER FARMER:

The average retention for a Child Safety officer is five years, which is actually above the public service average. And if any of you could see the work of a Child Safety officer and what they deal with every single day. They deal with the depths of depravity every single day. They have the most enormous and confronting responsibility every day. And they are still staying in our system for over five years. And I think that says a lot about the sort of people who are doing this work. They do it because they care.

With an enormous injection of staff – over 500 by the end of next year – that is naturally going to mean that the proportion of new staff compared to more experienced staff is actually quite high. And the Department has put in a significant amount of work to make sure that we support those new people. One of the things that was identified, and you will see this in one of the reports tabled yesterday, was that the staff working in the Caboolture office simply did not have appropriate supervision for the demand which was placed upon them. So we are very conscious of the demands on very new staff. And in fact, in one of the employee surveys that was conducted last year that asked about whether employees felt that they were supported by the leadership of the Department, over 79 per cent of our staff indicated that they felt they were strongly supported by management. So we know how much stress our staff are under. They deal with increasingly complex and demanding cases. And so we put a lot of work into making sure that they are supported.

REPORTER:

Can you guarantee that the findings of the latest investigation into the death of Mason Lee will be released before the end of the year?

MINISTER FARMER:

There were two reports into the death of Mason Jet Lee, I guess you could say. One of them is the...

REPORTER:

The one [inaudible] by the Public Service Commissioner.

MINISTER FARMER:

Yes, I understand. I mean, that is up to the Premier and the Public Sector Commissioner. But I understand that the results of that investigation will be released. The Premier and this government has committed to being absolutely transparent about the findings of these reports because if there are issues we need to know that they are going to be addressed.

REPORTER:

And when would we expect that report from the Public Service Commissioner?

MINISTER FARMER:

Oh look, I understand that that report will be available very soon. I can't give you an exact day.

REPORTER:

A matter of days?

MINISTER FARMER:

I can't make any promises, but I understand it is not going to be very long.

ADVISOR:

Thanks everyone..

[ENDS]

Program: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier

Steven Miles, Deputy Premier

Dr Jeanette Young, Chief Health Officer

Date: 15 June 2020

Duration: 12mins 26sec

E&OE

PREMIER:

In extra good news for Queensland overnight – zero new cases which is wonderful to see. So once again, I thank Queenslanders for all the work that they've been doing and it's an absolute testament to the great work that Queenslanders are doing so keep up the social distancing and the hand hygiene. We have a total of 1065 and we still only have five active cases.

Just want to give a quick update from National Cabinet as well because there are some different reports out there. So first and foremost for stage three the Prime Minister has asked all states to look at the one person per four square metres. We are actively considering that. We don't have a problem. Dr Young also advises that some industries have already put in plans which is one person per seven square metres which is fitness facilities and things like gyms. So we will work with the industry but we don't see a problem with what the Prime Minister is saying.

Today...this is also a big issue for Queenslanders....and a lot of people have been raising the issue of the number of people allowed to attend a funeral. So today, sorry from tomorrow, there will be allowed 100 people to attend a loved ones funeral. And I really want to thank the community for raising this issue. I know it's been very, very tough over the past few months. But in relation to that, and Dr Young will give you a few more details, but you will have to have a list of the names that attend in case anything does happen. But it's been something that people out in the community have been talking about and something that we wanted to address very quickly.

So I'll had over to the Deputy Premier and Dr Young and then we're happy to take a few quick questions.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The restrictions we've had to enforce on funerals has been one of the hardest for us to implement. We have received hundreds of heart breaking stories from families wanting to have more people to greive their loved ones. It's an event that people don't get to choose the timing of so they can't put it off as they can other events and so to be able to now allow up to 100 people at a funeral provided records are kept of those attending and social distancing

measures are implemented we can do that safely while allowing people to grieve their loved ones.

Our pathology services passed a significant milestone in the last 24 hour reporting period. We've now done more than 250,000 tests for COVID-19. More than a quarter of a million tests. Testament to the incredible work of our health professionals as well as our scientists and our pathology services. Something they should be very, very proud of and I'm grateful to them.

DR YOUNG:

Well no new cases in Queensland overnight which is excellent news. And as you heard we've ticked over 250,000 tests. So thank you to every one of those Queenslanders who've come forward and been tested. And that's the most important thing we need to all continue to do. If you're unwell with any symptoms please stay at home and isolate yourself from the other members of the household and get tested as quickly as possible. And if we just make that our new way of living we'll manage to get through this and we'll manage to lift restrictions. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, can I just quickly check, sorry on the funeral stuff. How will that work? So will people have to put in a request to you or it'll be a blanket rule that 100 people can attend a funeral but they have to send the list to the Health Department? How does it work?

DR YOUNG:

No. So anyone from tomorrow can have a funeral with 100 mourners. They must keep a list of all of the people who attend with contact details so that if there were to be a case amongst that group of 100 our contact tracers can very quickly get hold of the other people. That's very important. But that is private information so the organiser of the funeral – the next of kin of the person who's died – needs to maintain that list and have it available. They will need to maintain it for eight weeks. They do not need to show it to anyone unless someone in that group tests positive and then they need to have it immediately available so that we can very, very quickly contact trace all of the people.

REPORTER:

And it's still 20 at a wedding correct?

DR YOUNG:

A wedding is a gathering so at the moment, yes there's 20 people who can gather.


REPORTER:

Premier, can we get some clarification on the wage freeze...

PREMIER:

Government will be making further announcements this week about that.

REPORTER:



But earlier this year you said...

PREMIER:

I'm not going to comment any further.

REPORTER:

So you are not going to be able to stand by your commitment of [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

My commitment will be honoured.

REPORTER:

Ok, so the first of July will be honoured?

PREMIER:

We'll be making further announcements later on.

REPORTER:

Premier, is there any chance you could decide to open the borders before the end of the month?

PREMIER:

No, so our roadmap clearly says July 10. So I might just clarify a few comments that came out of National Cabinet. So I raised at National Cabinet that Queensland has very comprehensive roadmap and that July 10 is listed there. I also mentioned that we will review at the end of the month but it is our clear intention that July 10 would be the date for consideration.

REPORTER:

How did the Prime Minister take that to mean that you had made an announcement about opening on July [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well perhaps he's just read the roadmap.

REPORTER:

So you don't see it as him putting pressure on you?

PREMIER:

No not at all. No not at all. I was very clear in the National Cabinet meeting.

REPORTER:

Premier, what do you make of plans [inaudible] Cross River Rail [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yeah Claire, look that's a really good question and I just want to put some of the facts on the record. So we know that as part of our Unite and Recover we need to make sure that our infrastructure is happening right across Queensland. that's why we've committed to that \$50 billion of infrastructure spend. I understand the Prime Minister is going to be making some further announcements today about \$1 billion across the nation but we're committed to our \$50 billion commitment over the next four years. And Cross River Rail is one of the largest projects here in the south east with more than 2000 workers on site. That number is going to increase to 3000 so an extra 1000 people. And of course, there's going to be 450 apprentices and trainees as part of that so Minister Jones advises me that the majority of workers there, from 97 per cent, are locals and I want to see even more local people get involved in this project. It's going to unlock the city. It's going to mean faster travel especially from those areas from outer suburban coming in and that's absolutely important that we continue to progress. And of course, just down the road here, the first new underground train station smack bang in the middle of the city that has been built for more than 100 years.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] at the moment Premier about names that might be offensive – people murdering [inaudible]...what's your view on how councils should treat this? Should those names be changed?

PREMIER:

Yes Alison. So what happens and some names have been changed over the years. What happens is that councils usually with consultation with the community put forward those proposals to the Department of Natural Resources and Lands and then it is taken in consideration and some of them have been changed. So the opportunity does exist there for the community to do so.

REPORTER:

What do you think about in the context right now, do you think that we should be actively trying to....

PREMIER:

But it's been happening. It's been happening over many years. It's not new.

REPORTER:

What are your thoughts on Boundary streets around Brisbane? Do you think they should be changed or kept as they are?

PREMIER:

Look, I'm not aware of that one but of course that's a matter for the community. They can put forward a view to the department and the department can consider that.

REPORTER:

Any sympathy for Deb Frecklington today, given what she's going through?

PREMIER:

Well, I have one clear purpose and that is to focus on the economic recovery. If the LNP are so absorbed by themselves, that's a matter for them.

REPORTER:

Were you pleased to see the polling chart that showed Labor could do quite well in some of the marginal seats yesterday?

PREMIER:

Well, I'm absolutely focused on the recovery. We have had over a hundred thousand Queenslanders lose their jobs as result of COVID. I have made it very clear to the Cabinet and my government that every single person must be focused on our Unite and Recovery plan for Queensland jobs. That means bringing about more infrastructure in Queensland. That means identifying more opportunities in industries and it also means to make sure that we give Queenslanders the skills they need for the future. That's our focus, getting people into work, back to work and creating a future that is prosperous for Queensland.

REPORTER:

Some senior people within the LNP think that Deb's being targeted because she is a woman. Do you think that the LNP has a problem with strong woman?

PREMIER:

That's a matter for them.

REPORTER:

Premier, there's a defence program I hear you're chasing, two year contracts by the Feds...

PREMIER:

I think that's the Rheinmetall one yes.

REPORTER:

Is it?

PREMIER:

I think so.

REPORTER:

What does it mean for Queensland and is there anything the Government can do?

PREMIER:

I think that's the LAN 400 one. Is that the one?

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] or something like that.

PREMIER:

Yes, I'm pretty sure but I will double check. If it's the one to do with Rheinmetall, my government helped secure that for Queensland and absolutely, we would absolutely 100 per cent back having that next stage in Queensland as well. That means thousands of jobs, especially in that whole region from Toowoomba down to Ipswich and right out to the Gold Coast. Defence is a key industry for Queensland. It's thousands of jobs and it can mean thousands of more jobs.

REPORTER:

In regard to Cabinet today, is the Cabinet...

PREMIER:

I'm not telling you about Cabinet Patrick for a start.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] saying to rule out legislation, how are you going to do it?

PREMIER:

Well, we will tell you later on.

REPORTER:

Parliament's back this week...

PREMIER:

Yes.

REPORTER:

Is there any COVID legislation that needs to get through?

PREMIER:

Yes there will be. We'll announce that during the week.

REPORTER:

Are you open to deferring the pay rise and giving them double next year?

PREMIER:

Patrick, you can ask me every question you want to but we are going to be making further announcements this week.

REPORTER:

Do you think they will change the leader of opposition this week?

PREMIER:

I do not care about the LNP. I am focused on Queenslanders. They are focused on themselves. Only my government is focused on the job at hand. Queenslanders, getting them



into work. Making sure they have employment opportunities and making sure because we've had such a great health response in Queensland, we can now focus on the economic response.

REPORTER:

Who do you think it's easier to be Deb Frecklington or David Crisafulli?

PREMIER:

Doesn't really matter. That's a matter for them. It is entirely a matter for them.

REPORTER:

Do you think you will win in October?

PREMIER:

I don't take anything for granted. We are working and focused on the economic recovery of this state. Look, no other government in the world has had to deal with at the moment what everyone is dealing with, with the COVID pandemic. No one has had to really, you know, lock everything down and then gradually bring everything back up and we have got people out there hurting. They are absolutely hurting in the state and we have got to bring them out of this correctly and make sure we continue with the health response and we make sure we focus on the economic response. Ok, thanks. I've got to go to Cabinet now. Thanks.

[ENDS]

Released under the Official Information Act - OIA - DPC

Event: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk; Deputy Premier Steven Miles; Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer and Deputy Commissioner Steve Gollschewski

Airdate: Tuesday 30 June 2020

Duration: 31 minutes 27 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

Okay, so in some further good news for Queensland today, we have zero new cases. We still have two active cases in Queensland so our total remains at 1067. From the outset can I thank Queenslanders for the great work that they have been doing. Both in Stage One, and in Stage Two, and of course today we look at Stage Three. During Stage Two we wanted Queenslanders to support Queenslanders, and that's what everybody has been doing right across our state, supporting our local businesses, helping people get back into work. So today, we will be – from Friday, noon, 3rd of July – we will be moving into some aspects of Stage Three. The Deputy Premier will go into a bit more detail, but for example, wedding ceremonies will be up to 100 people. There will be contact community sports, there'll be no limits on spectators outside with social distancing. We'll be looking at with our businesses, like cafes and pubs and restaurants and surf clubs and RSLs, that for small businesses under 200 square metres, the one person per two square metre rule will apply. So that will mean more people coming and supporting our local small businesses across Queensland. And I know that's something we have been speaking to the industry about. Casinos will be able to be open and of course concert venues and theatres, 50 per cent or one per four square metre rule will apply. Churches, I know important this is, and places of worship, family households will be able to sit together as well. So that's all due to the tremendous work of Queenslanders.

Today I want to address the issue of borders. Let me state from the outset, Queensland has very large concerns about the state of Victoria. There have been 250 cases in the past seven days. Yesterday, 75 and, today, 64. There is community transmission. There have been outbreaks in hotels, schools, healthcare, retail and a distribution centre. So, due to the current community transmission levels, the border with Victoria will remain closed and will be strengthened. Tougher measures will apply from this Friday, July 3, at 12:00pm. Anyone who has travelled from Victoria, including Queenslanders, will be prevented from entering or will have to quarantine at a hotel at their own expense for two weeks. We just can't risk removing border restrictions for people coming from areas of Victoria right now. And I hope Queenslanders understand why I am saying that. I'm not alone in saying that. I understand the South Australian Premier also has concerns. But these are very big concerns. We want to help Victoria out. Let me also state that we've sent our Deputy Chief Health Officer down to Victoria. Dr Young will also mention to you that we are prepared to give even more support

to Victoria. And I think that I speak on behalf of other leaders when we want to do everything we can to help Victoria get this community transmission under control.

In relation to the other states and territories, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales, Northern Territory and ACT are all in a similar position to Queensland. So, from July 10, people will be allowed to into Queensland after filling in a border declaration. This border declaration is to ensure that no one has travelled to Victoria in the past 14 days. If you falsify a document you will face strict penalties and fines up to \$4000. There is also one proviso here, and I hope Queensland families will understand this. If the Chief Health Officer reviews any state or territory at any time and there is outbreaks of community transmission like Victoria, we may have to take further actions. So I just want to make sure that everyone is aware of that.

We don't take these decisions lightly, and the Chief Health Officer has provided Government with very clear advice. My number one concern is to protect Queenslanders and Queensland families. That's what you support me to do and that is what I wake up every single day, wanting to ensure I do the best for this state. These decisions have not been taken lightly. They have been given careful consideration from the Chief Health Officer and from Government. We believe we have the balance right. We will do everything to preserve Queensland's good record at preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our state. We are in a very good position at the moment, but we know, at any time, anything could change. We have good systems in place, and we must do anything we can do to help Victoria during this time. I will hand over to the Deputy Prime Minister, then the Chief Health Officer. Then we'll take questions at the end.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank you, Premier. As the Premier outlined, there are no further cases of COVID-19 in Queensland. That means that since the 1st June, when we went to Stage Two restrictions, we've had just nine new cases. Seven of those are from overseas and two acquired interstate. Leaving us with just two active cases and only one in hospital. That's in stark contrast, of course, to what we have seen recently in Victoria. Today, they surpassed twice the number of total cases as we have had here in Queensland since the outbreak commenced. They've had more locally-acquired cases than Queensland has had in total. They've had more than six times the number of cases where the source of the infection could not be identified than we have had. They have more than 288 active cases right now compared to just two in Queensland, and seven in New South Wales. They are managing multiple outbreaks on multiple fronts - schools, hotels, healthcare facilities, workplaces. I want to emphasise that there is no interstate rivalry here.

We're all in this together and we all need to work together. It's in all of our interests for us to suppress this virus across the country including, right now, in Victoria. We've now offered, and sent, our Deputy Chief Health Officer to Victoria to assist them. We are undertaking testing here every single day of Victorian-taken samples. We have called today for expressions of interest for 40 nurses who we will deploy to Victoria to assist them. This virus does not respect state borders and so we must enforce them. These new, stricter rules will ensure that we contain the virus in Victoria. Our message to Queenslanders is please do not go there. Our message to Victorians is please do not come here. Until these outbreaks are

under control. We do not want to bring those cases here. We want to be able to use our resources in Victoria to assist them there. I want to thank the Chief Health Officer and the Premier for holding firm on these decisions. If we had relaxed our borders sooner, as some called on us to do, these cases would be here now. We would be battling these cases here now. It's easy for those on the sidelines and even those in Canberra to make calls, but the responsibility for the health of Queenslanders rests with their government, their Premier, their Chief Health Officer.

These new restrictions will apply to people travelling from and in Victoria since - after midday, 3 July. On to the good news, however, our plan to allow Queensland to unite and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic is all about getting businesses open and getting people back into jobs. From the 10th July, visitors from states other than Victoria will be able to apply for a border pass and travel here. This will allow the recommencement of interstate tourism to Queensland from the 10th July. Border controls will continue to apply, and strict penalties will apply for people who lie to us about any travel to Victoria.

We are also able now to bring forward Stage Three of our easing of local restrictions here in Queensland. We're bringing them forward by one week, as well as making them stronger. Our limits on private gatherings will increase from a maximum of 20 to a maximum of 100 from the 3rd July, from this Friday. That's 100 guests at weddings, funerals, house parties and fitness classes. From Friday, Queenslanders will be able to order a beer at the bar, play the pokies, order a counter meal or go to the casino. Kids' sport will be back. Contact sport will be back. As well as spectators. I know many parents like me who will be looking forward to busy Saturdays racing from one soccer field to another.

In hospitality, pubs, clubs, restaurants and cafes, the limit of 20 people per space will be lifted. There will be no maximum of number of people per space or venue provided they have four square metres of floor space per patron. In smaller venues, they will be allowed one person per two square metres, up to a maximum of 50 for venues between 100 and 200 square metres. That's smaller venues. In stadiums, we will allow them up to 50 per cent of capacity or 25,000 spectators, whichever is the lesser. All of these new restrictions, though, require ongoing adherence to physical distancing. That means, 1.5 metres between household groups. So when we say we're lifting the limit on spectators at outdoor field sports, we will still be asking family groups to maintain 1.5 metres between themselves. Similarly, at churches, we'll be urging family groups to maintain 1.5 metres between their family groups.

These restriction, as well as the border restrictions, will be regularly assessed by our Chief Health Officer and we will continue to take her advice about what we can do to keep Queenslanders safe while also allowing more businesses to open up, more economic activity and more Queenslanders back into their jobs.

DR YOUNG:

So no new cases in Queensland overnight which is excellent, and it's very important that we continue to maintain what we've put in place in Queensland. So it's important that people continue, if they're sick, to stay at home and get tested because that will give us the sign whether we've got any concerns anywhere in our community. This is a virus. We're not going to be able to keep it out. We just have to recognise it as quickly as possible when it happens

here in Queensland. So that is critical. Then people do need to maintain some of those very strict processes to protect themselves. So that is maintaining social distancing, maintaining that 1.5 metre distance. So wherever you are, if you're able to do that, that's a really important strategy. And, again, it's very important if you're sick, stay at home, because you won't spread the virus then.

Now, we have seen what's happened in Victoria and all states and territories are doing their absolute best to assist Victoria in every way possible because we know that if there's an outbreak in one state, if we can't maintain it within that state, it can then spread. So there are quite a few things that we all need to do. The first is that it's humans that will spread this virus. So it's important that people don't go there and it's important that Victorians don't come to Queensland. They have got so many cases there in their community that it is a real risk. So that's been put in place and that border between Queensland and Victoria has been strengthened.

Then when need to, and I've certainly worked with people in Queensland to support Victoria in every way possible, so Dr Sonya Bennett, who's acted as my deputy and has been the Director of Communicable Diseases in Queensland for a number of years and, indeed, has chaired the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia for Australia during this pandemic, has agreed and is now in Victoria. She's there today assisting them. Plus, we've offered other staff and, today, I've put out a call seeking volunteers from amongst our nurses to go down and assist. Every single state and territory is doing that. That's the most important thing we can actually do to protect Queenslanders today, is to help Victoria to get on top of their many outbreaks. They have got a large number of active outbreaks happening there in their state, mainly in Melbourne. All of those things are really important.

Now, at the same time, because we've not had any cases in Queensland - indeed, in the last week we've had that one gentleman who was repatriated from Papua New Guinea - we can open up what we're doing within the state. As long as people remember to not go to Victoria and potentially bring the virus back, we can open up what we're doing. So that means we can now have a hundred people in gatherings. We can have more people in all of our pubs and clubs, and restaurants, playing sport - all of those areas, all of those restrictions have been significantly lifted. There are a few still in place. So that one person per four-square metre rule, because that has stood us so well, because that's about density, it's about not having too many people together, and meaning that people can still maintain that 1.5-metre distance if you've got people spread out. So that means everywhere can go to that one person per four -- square metres.

Now, for the very small places, because we know that's really viable, we've encouraged people to have one per two. The reason we can do that is that the numbers are smaller. So there's a cap of 50 there. The numbers are smaller so we can effectively contact trace and because businesses have all had the time to prepare now so that they know how to capture people's details so they can provide them rapidly to the contact tracers that would need to contact those up to 50 people. So, that's in place. Then we've seen the stadiums work very, very effectively. They've done a brilliant job at managing that social distancing. So now we're going to open that up to other venues because we've learnt from the stadiums and the assistance they've given us in about where they've seen the rub points, so that we've now been

able to work with other venues about how they can increase the numbers of people in those venues. So this has been an exercise that we've all learnt as we've gone through what's worked, where we need to change things, where we need to tighten things up. And I, of course, thank the Queensland community for how they've engaged and how they've been involved. It's been very important. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Just to be clear, Premier, if I could, so the state is closed to all Victorians. Those who go in to quarantine from Victoria and pay their own costs, who might they be? If the borders are shut how will...

PREMIER:

Well, exactly. That's the point they have to weigh up. So if they're going to come here after lunchtime on Friday, they will be sent to mandatory quarantine in a hotel for two weeks at their own expense.

REPORTER:

Why would they be allowed to cross the border anyway? Why wouldn't they just be turned away if you see my point?

PREMIER:

Well, this is what we have to do legally. So we have to abide by the law.

REPORTER:

Does that mean any flights coming from Victoria as well, people getting off a flight from Victoria?

PREMIER:

Everyone will have to fill out that pass and they'll either have to turn around and go home or they'll be going into mandatory quarantine.

REPORTER:

Just to clarify, Victorians will have to pay for their own hotel quarantine...

PREMIER:

Correct.

REPORTER:

..will Queensland residents have to do that as well? They can't quarantine at home?

PREMIER:

Correct. Can I urge all Queenslanders - please do not go to Victoria. Please do not go to Victoria. Stay in Queensland.

REPORTER:

And if I'm coming from New South Wales I have to declare that I have not been to Victoria?

PREMIER:

Yes. So the concern we have there, and it's a very good question Lane, is that we now have the crossover of New South Wales and Victoria school holidays. So our concern is people from New South Wales going into Victoria and then choosing to come to Queensland. That is why we now have the border declaration that must be declared. And if you falsify that document, it's \$4000.

REPORTER:

How will the road border operate in terms of filling those documents out? Everybody will be pulled over?

PREMIER:

It will be online. Everybody will be able to fill that out and it will be enforced by the Police and our State Disaster Coordinator's happy to talk about a bit later.

REPORTER:

Premier, there's been a lot of criticism from the Prime Minister about Queensland keeping their borders shut and we've got the results. Victoria hasn't. What do you say to the Prime Minister? Could he have done more to keep Victoria under control?

PREMIER:

Well, I think, for a start, these border wars have got to stop. I think a national leader should have been able to bring all of the states and territories together. Frankly, I'm a bit sick that Queensland has been singled out as opposed to South Australia, and Tasmania, just to name a few. And perhaps if Victoria had been almost self-quarantined or quarantined, then the Prime Minister could have set a date for all of the other states and territories once Victoria has under control. At the moment, what we have is a bit of a confrontation where fights are being picked at different states and, frankly, I don't think it's good enough. I've been silent for a long time and I will not be silenced for standing up for what I believe to be right, for the health advice that I'm being provided for by Dr Young. And Dr Young, and the advice that she has given us, has put Queensland in a very good position. We're not out of it yet. We know that. We know we've got a long way to go. But we have been able to open up Queensland faster. And I just want to share this with you, this is really important, because the total benefit of our internal restrictions being eased, that's stages 1, 2 and 3, is worth about \$1.82 billion a month and is around 167,000 jobs. Now, that's a lot of people that are able to get back into work, into Queensland, and get the economy going in Queensland faster because of the health response that we have had here.

REPORTER:

The threshold that was set by Dr Young when the two incubation periods had no community transmission which looks like it has eventuated for all the other states so is that what's going

to be looked for now when it comes to allowing people from Victoria into Queensland? Is that what we will have to see?

PREMIER:

I can get Dr Young to address that, but we actually spoke about that this morning. Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

Yes, that's correct. So it is about not having community transmission. That's the part that's vital. So if you've got community transmission happening, then we can't open to people moving between those different sites.

REPORTER:

So [inaudible] it's off the cards indefinitely at the moment for Victoria because they've got massive community transmission.

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So it needs to be sorted. But we're doing everything we can to help them sort that and people would have seen that there was significant transmission within New South Wales and it all got managed.

REPORTER:

And the message is if there are spikes, outbreaks in the other states, we might have to close the borders again?

PREMIER:

Yes.

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

Premier, the New South Wales Premier has previously said that Queensland should open its border and today she is saying that Queenslanders are spreading the virus south, what do you have to say to that?

PREMIER:

Well, I've got no evidence of that. Dr Young, do you have any evidence of that?

DR YOUNG:

There was one case early on that we think that someone came along the coast, sailed down the coast of Queensland and they ended up being confirmed in New South Wales. So we never quite worked out whether they got it while they were sailing along the coast coming into a port or whether they had it when they first arrived into the waters of Queensland.

REPORTER:

Premier, just to confirm, if there is for example an outbreak in New South Wales, you won't hesitate to close that border?

PREMIER:

That is up to Dr Young but if there is large outbreaks like we have seen in Victoria the Chief Health Officer has the powers to do that.

REPORTER:

Premier, did you give serious consideration to extending all border closures for another month given what happened in Victoria?

PREMIER:

I think we've taken on board the health advice and the health advice is very clear that the majority of the other states and territories are in a similar position to Queensland. The big concern we have is Victoria and that is why we have taken those tough steps today. Those tough measures.

REPORTER:

There's previously been a lot of rhetoric around National Cabinet working really well together and being successful. Given that you said there are tensions and fights being picked is it still working as effectively as it was?

PREMIER:

I support the National Cabinet but what I don't support is people being friendly inside those walls and then sending out others to do their dirty work.

REPORTER:

And can I just check, constitutionally, excluding Victoria that's allowed under the law right?

PREMIER:

Yes. That's my understanding.

REPORTER:

There was some question that it might discriminate against a [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well it's not discriminating because it applied exactly to Queenslanders as well. So if Queenslanders go there and come back they are faced with exactly the same procedures that now we are asking to apply to Victoria.

REPORTER:

Premier, when people come back can they choose which hotel they quarantine in?



PREMIER:

No. So it's not going to be The Westin or The Marriot I don't think.

REPORTER:

And will we still have police at all of the border checking people at the airports and [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes. Yes we will and we're doing this to keep Queenslanders safe. I've said that all along, that's my number one concern. We're going to keep Queenslanders safe and we are going to make sure that we do everything we can to help Victoria manage the community transmission. And like Dr Young just said then too, New South Wales got on top of their community transmission very quickly. Which is why on July 10 we can open up to New South Wales.

REPORTER:

Can I just clarify – Queenslanders returning home from essentially anywhere have been quarantining in hotels and they will keep doing that, is that right? Returning from anywhere?

PREMIER:

Sorry, are you talking about from overseas now?

REPORTER:

So from overseas and from other states. Some of...

PREMIER:

Only from Victoria.

REPORTER:

Okay.

REPORTER:

Can I quickly just ask, off borders but kind of related?

PREMIER:

Any other questions? Do you want to hear from...

REPORTER:

I do want to hear from Steve real quickly as well but I just want to ask about AFL and are you worried that it's going to drive games out of Queensland? We're hearing that the Suns are saying that they might not come back to Queensland and that the teams might be setting up camp in New South Wales and that games might not go here.



PREMIER:

Well we just have to take these tough measures. I'm happy for Dr Young to address that in a bit more detail but they put forward their COVID Safe plans and we have to follow what the plans are.

REPORTER:

Can I ask one about nightclubs?

PREMIER:

Yes. Yes Lydia.

REPORTER:

Nightclubs was in the roadmap, will they reopen and how do you go nightclub with social distance?

PREMIER:

Well, they have to have a COVID Safe plan for a start and what we have seen is some nightclubs put forward a proposal where they are seated but you are able now to go and order at the bar so...

REPORTER:

You can dance sitting down?

PREMIER:

You can listen to the music.

REPORTER:

Would you feel awkward dancing with four square metres around you?

REPORTER:

Patty Lions dances sitting down.

REPORTER:

Can I ask about workplaces? What does this mean in terms of people going back to work now in a more normal sense rather than [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes, so that's a really good question and of course, we've been gradually bringing the public service back across Queensland. I know other employers are bringing their people back to work as well. It has to be done in a safe and measured way especially according to the four square metre rule but I expect that we would see more people returning back to work now. And that's a good thing. Ok, Deputy Commissioner.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Good afternoon everyone. Just to reiterate. We're where we are because of the measures that we've had in place. So the work we'll be doing to make sure the system works effectively is already underway so I'm very confident that we'll be able to make sure that those people who travel to or from Victoria will be identified. So it's not about Victorians. It's about anyone who's been in Victoria for the period that's in question. So the work's underway for that. The message that I have to give to everyone is to please make sure that you understand what the new regime is and please understand what the new requirements are. Messaging will go out about that but it make things a lot more smoother for everyone that's travelling if they understand what's required of them before they arrive. Of course, as we have all the way through this event we will try to educate people and help them work through it.

But please, make sure you're aware of what's required of it. Because as you've heard, there will be new offences, and our offices will be out there making sure that people are complying with the law and are obeying it, and if they're going to blatantly disregard it we will take action. And I think finally what I really want to say is that it really comes down to one key issue – don't go to Victoria or come from Victoria because there are requirements for you to either turn around of pay for your own quarantine for 14 days. All those new arrangements that the Chief Health Officer and the Deputy Premier spoke about as well as the Premier, we will be enforcing them as well. So we'll be taking action to make sure people comply.

REPORTER:

Can you just explain, so the mechanisms of it – so we're still going have checkpoints at the border so every car coming through...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

You will see a very different type of approach, you will see police check points...it's not just about police, we have other agencies that are assisting us as well as the ADF and some of our airport borders and those sorts of things. They will continue. What we are implementing processes that will make it much more seamless for people that aren't coming from Victoria to get through. But there will be checks and balances. So as you've heard, there will be offences for anyone that deliberately misleads, and we'll have the ability to take action on those persons that try to game the system.

REPORTER:

And what about at the airport – is it literally if you get off the plane that has come from Victoria...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

So we're still working on the really fine details of that – so what I would like to do is wait until we can get it out there and articulate that really clearly to people so they understand.

REPORTER:

So if I fly in from Melbourne on essentially...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

If you've been in Victoria, you're in the...

REPORTER:

So if I come from South Australia I still have to declare that I have not been in Melbourne for the last 14 days...

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

We'll be checking to make sure that that's correct.

REPORTER:

In terms of the road borders...given that it's school holidays [inaudible] do you have to broaden that kind of operation for the border checks?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

What we've done very much is that we'll localise that. So each of those border controls we have right across the borders with New South Wales and including the Northern Territory have been designed for those areas, and the operational demands for those areas. That can occur again.

REPORTER:

Are essential workers still exempt?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

There will still be exemptions in place, I'll leave them for the Chief Health Officer.

REPORTER:

Can I ask Dr Young one more? The casino COVIDsafe plan – how will that work? Will people be doing pokies with their elbows? Because of lot of cash has to turn over on the tables. How will it work?

DR YOUNG:

They've put in a COVIDsafe plan so essentially they're limited by one person per four square metres across the whole venue, and they need to keep details of anyone who comes into the casino so if needs be we can contact trace rapidly.

REPORTER:

Like normal procedure [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

So they've got enhanced cleaning in place, so they've got all of those systems.

REPORTER:

Can I just ask you about the AFL – obviously it has been prompted by the situation in Victoria...how long is that going to apply and really is this just to try and make sure there are no Victorian teams trying to come into Queensland at all?

DR YOUNG:

Yep, so the AFL were excellent. I communicated with them last Friday, that was before we saw the really big increase in numbers, but we have seen significant numbers, and I said that we needed to change the arrangements so they worked with me through the weekend to put in place a really good response so there won't be teams from Melbourne coming into Queensland until everything is managed and under control in Victoria.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DRG

Engagement: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Steven Miles, Deputy Premier

Dr Jeanette Young, Chief Health Officer

Steve Gollschewski, Deputy Commissioner QPS

Date: 9 July 2020

Duration: 24mins 02sec

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Again overnight we've had no further cases of COVID-19 leaving our cases still at 1,068, we remain with two active cases, just one in hospital. That means our streak of no locally acquired cases has continued. We're pleased to see testing rate sustained at that level beyond our target of 5000 a day in the last reporting period, we tested 6873 people, bringing our total number of tests now to 371,816 Queenslanders, a fantastic result. Thank you to each and every one of them for getting tested. Our success from here will rely on sustaining that high testing rate and I'll say a bit more about that in a moment as will the Chief Health Officer. In contrast, Victoria has had 2942 cases. That was as of yesterday. 860 are active. To put that into context, Victoria has now had seven times more cases known to be locally acquired than Queensland has had throughout this pandemic. Of course, globally the number of cases also continues to rise, leaving Australia and Queensland as one of the few places that has managed to successfully suppress the virus so far.

It's now almost a week since we went to that stage three easing of restrictions. And so far, that easing has gone very well. It's a key part of our plan to unite and recover, to get people back into work, to get businesses open again. That success has continued, because of our strong stance on our state borders and, of course, that continues. We were pleased to see New South Wales close their border to Victoria on the 7th, and tomorrow, we lift our borders to other states and territories other than Victoria. Because of that escalating rate of cases in Victoria, and because of the lag between that community transmission and the application of the New South Wales border, we are announcing today additional measures to ensure we keep Queensland safe.

The period of time between the 7th, when the New South Wales border closed, and the 10th, when people from New South Wales will begin to be able to return to Queensland, means there's a period of a week to 10 days where there is an escalated risk. Where there is a risk that people from New South Wales were in contact with people from Victoria before their border closed, and they may enter Queensland during their incubation period, before they can be tested for COVID-19. And that's why we are announcing these strict new measures because we can't afford...we can't afford to import that risk from other states. So first of all, for people who have been in Victoria, or live in Victoria, within 14 days, they will no longer

be able to travel to Queensland. We will strengthen, we will be much stricter, in applying the exemptions and allowing people to travel here. We have seen a number of people attempt to travel from Victoria, and willingly go into that mandatory hotel quarantine where they have to pay for the cost of that hotel quarantine, because they are making the decision that that two weeks and that cost is worth it to get out of Victoria. And so, we don't want that to continue. We need to reserve hotel accommodation for people who need to be quarantined, Queenslanders and Australians returning from overseas, Queenslanders returning from Victoria. And so we will be much stricter there. That will mean some very hard decisions and that will mean we need the community's understanding. There will be people who have very good reasons to travel to Queensland, and while there will continue to be compassionate grounds, hardship considerations, they will be much stricter applied to people returning from Victoria.

In addition, for those returning to our state, travelling to our state from other parts of Australia, we will be introducing mandatory testing for anyone who develops symptoms within 14 days of arriving in Queensland. That will apply to Queenslanders returning to Queensland, as well as people visiting from other parts of the state. It will be a condition of the Queensland border pass, the pass that you need to re-enter or enter Queensland, that you declare that if you have a symptom, develop a symptom, that you will go and get tested and if you fail to do so the fine of up to \$4004 will apply. That's a very significant penalty for people who choose not to get tested if they develop symptoms within 14 days of arriving in Queensland. We'll make it as easy as possible for people to understand those requirements and get those tests. So when people apply for the border pass and make that declaration, they provide us with their contact details. We will SMS them during their stay to check if they have developed symptoms and remind them of their obligation and of the penalty if they do not get tested. We've also asked our HHSs in areas with high numbers of tourists - so where most of those visitors will be going like the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Cairns - to set up pop-up clinics in those tourist destinations so that any visitor, once they've signed that declaration, once they've committed to us that if they develop a symptom they will get tested, they will get that reminder and then they can go to one of those pop-up clinics.

We thank everyone for complying with these and all of the other requirements. We understand that this will cause inconvenience for some. It will cause delays at the border and we ask for people's understanding. Some people, some commentators, some politicians, might choose to use those delays to criticise these measures but we make no apologies for them. They are what has kept Queenslanders safe so far and they will be crucial to our efforts to continue to suppress this virus here in Queensland so that we can commit our resources to supporting Victoria as they attempt to suppress their community transmission there. I'll ask the Chief Health Officer and the Assistant Commissioner to a few words.

DR YOUNG:

So it's six months now since the world first heard of a new coronavirus and an enormous amount has happened in that time. And Queenslanders have played their part. So again, as we see this new threat coming out of the large number of cases in Victoria, I ask that Queenslanders again play their part. So there are three things I ask of every single Queenslanders today. The first one is if you have any symptoms, or you think you might have

symptoms, please immediately get tested and isolate yourself. That's really important. The second one is maintain social distancing. I know everyone's out and about, and they're going back to their normal lives and that's great to see. But we all need to still protect ourselves, our families, and the community, and maintain that social distancing wherever possible. And the third - at this point in time, please, do not go to Victoria. That is really important. Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHESKI:

Morning. Can I just add to what the Deputy Premier and Dr Young have said around the regime that we have in place. And realistically, it's the whole thing that needs to work. Whilst there's a focus on our borders - and I can assure you that the Queensland Police Service and our partner agencies are well prepared to enforce the new restrictions that have come in and the ones announced this morning - so the message to everyone is very clear. If you are intending to come into Queensland - One - make sure; sorry I should say that includes returning residents - One; make sure you have your border declaration pass filled out correctly. Make sure that you are entitled to come into Queensland. Because we will not hesitate to refuse entry or turn people around that are not entitled to come to our state. Similarly, those that may well be able to come in, but are coming out of a hot spot that are not otherwise properly exempted, will be going into self-paid mandatory quarantine. We will be very careful to enforce that. Because that's the first part of our defence.

The other part of our defences in Queensland is to make sure that we all do the social distancing and abide by that. And that's very, very important. I am concerned that some sections of our community think that we're in such a good space that, because the border controls are working and because it's all about Victoria, we ask get back to normal. Well, we are not back to normal. And it was particularly disappointing to see that some licensed premises last weekend, one having been fined on the Gold Coast already and two currently under investigation in the Fortitude Valley, thought it was okay, or didn't do what they were supposed to do in order of maintaining proper social distancing in their premises. I assure all of those premises that might be operating this weekend, that we will be out and about proactively and making sure they are abiding by directions. If they choose not to, I will not hesitate to recommend to government that we reconsider those arrangements.

Can I talk about our borders a bit more. Look, every time we've introduced the border controls, it's been a very difficult period for us. Right back to March, when we first did this and every time we've changed the systems, it's been difficult, because it takes time for people to get used to it. We see increased flows. It puts pressure on the systems. We can only process so many vehicles and so many people at any given time. So to make that more easier for you as a member of the community that is coming into Queensland lawfully - plan ahead, allow extra time, make sure that you do have your border declaration pass filled out correctly before you come. That will make things much more seamless. Have it displayed if you're in a vehicle, and if you're going through the airport, you can have it on your phone. And please, please be patient. What we have seen each time we've brought in these new systems - they have improved. This one will improve as we go forward.

Can I just share with you some figures that highlight that for you. We've already seen 238,000, or over 238,000 border declaration passes filled out. Now, bearing in mind that they are only valid for seven days - and that's a very important point; people need to keep

renewing them and making sure they're up to date - that indicates to us that over 238,000 people are intending to come to Queensland in the next week. That is a lot of people. So that will mean that we'll see congestion and delays. So please be patient with us and we'll work through that. We've already turned around 1000 people at the road borders and we have also turned around - sorry, we have put into quarantine nearly 200 people through the airport borders into...coming out of a COVID hotspot. Not so many coming across our road borders and we sincerely hope that that stays that way but still 15 people that have been placed into mandatory quarantine coming over our borders. I expect that with the new restrictions that have been announced today there will be further people turned around. So the message to people coming out of Victoria is really very clear. Unless you have an exemption, unless you're a returning resident do not come to Queensland. And if you are a returning resident you will be placed into mandatory self-paid quarantine. Thank you.

REPORTER:

So Deputy Premier, can I just check - so what this means is that anyone who has been to Victoria including Queenslanders coming back to Queensland?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So Queenslanders coming back to Queensland will be required to go into that mandatory hotel quarantine and foot the bill of that quarantine. Victorian's attempting to come to Queensland will be turned around except in very limited circumstances.

REPORTER:

What are those circumstances? What sort of compassionate grounds might there be?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I might allow...the Chief Health Officer assesses those applications for exemptions so it's probably best for her to address those.

DR YOUNG:

So there's a very, very limited number of circumstances. So for instance, if someone's relative is dying. If their father or mother is dying then they can come up to Queensland. They go into mandatory hotel quarantine and if the hospital or palliative care service is able to supervise the interaction and provide PPE then that person can visit their dying relative. There are no exemptions to come to Queensland for a funeral because we know funerals are very high risk. The other exemptions are very limited. So we do have exemptions to maintain essential services in Queensland - so freight is exempt of course; so the truck drives are exempt and are able to continue to bring freight into Queensland. If we have people who are providing support, for instance, to the COVID response in Victoria. They're able to go down from Queensland, provide that support down there and come back but then they need to quarantine when they come back. So that applies to those nurses who willing went down to assist.

REPORTER:

Sorry but if I have a dying relative, I'm a Queenslander, I come back – or I'm a Victorian I go into quarantine – could I then be allowed out during that quarantine period to visit a dying relative?

DR YOUNG:

Only if the hospital or the palliative care service providing care to that dying individual is able to supervise the visits to ensure that PPE is used.

REPORTER:

That would require somebody to escort you from the hotel there and back presumably so you don't....

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

And Dr Young, so if you're in another state and you've been to Victoria does this rule apply to you as well? Even if you're not a Victorian resident, if you've been to Victoria you can't come?

DR YOUNG:

Anyone who has been in Victoria for any reason except for a very small list of exemptions will have to quarantine when they arrive in Queensland. But they can only come into Queensland if they've got specific reasons to come into Queensland.

REPORTER:

So if I'm from Sydney, I come up here but I've been to Melbourne the previous week or two weeks I've got to go into quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

No, you won't be allowed in unless you've got some exemptions. You need to remain in Sydney until you've been there for 14 days after leaving Victoria.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] what's been happening in Melbourne, given what could happen in New South Wales given the warnings from the Premier yesterday. Has there been any thought to keeping the borders shut?

DR YOUNG:

Of course there has been thought to it, but the decision is that we have very, very good systems in Queensland today, we're not where we were back in March when we didn't have the systems. We've got enormous capacity to test, which is why I continue to ask people to get tested. We've got enormous capacity to deal with any cases, so yes, I expect over the coming two weeks we will see cases in Queensland, but we've got the capacity to rapidly respond and to manage them.

REPORTER:

What would it take for the borders to be closed again?

DR YOUNG:

It would take something like what is happening in Victoria today. So community transmission. Uncontrolled community transmission.

REPORTER:

The Deputy Premier talked about pop-up clinics. Where are they going to be, how many of them, all around the state?

DR YOUNG:

So this morning I spoke to all of the chief executives of our hospital and health services and they know their communities, they know who is in their community and they will make those decisions. They know where tourists come, where people stay so they will be organising that.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, are you concerned this could be subject to a legal challenge? I think the Premier said last week it was fine because those rules apply to everyone regardless of if you're a Queenslanders or not.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, all of these directions have been subject to significant legal advice. Of course it is disappointing that the Prime Minister joined with Clive Palmer and Pauline Hanson to challenge Queensland's strong action to stop COVID-19 coming here, but it is our advice that all of the actions we have taken are entirely appropriate.

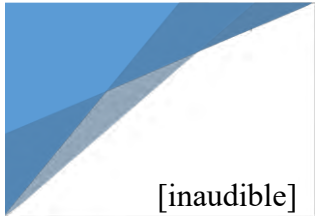
REPORTER:

Did you get to any stage yesterday discussing with the Premier the possibility of not opening tomorrow?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, but there is an ongoing conversation everyday really about what is happening in every state and what that means for keeping Queenslanders safe. The decision of New South Wales to put a border in place with Victoria does relieve some of the pressure on Queensland to stop those Victorians coming here, so that was something that we could take into account. And so we looked at what other measures we could implement that would allow for the border opening tomorrow while also keeping Queenslanders safe, and that is why these extra restrictions on people who have been to Victoria as well as this mandatory testing regime made sense. We have the capacity to do a lot more tests, and so requiring visitors and returning travellers to get tested if they develop symptoms was a sensible measure, whilst still allowing them to come here and support our tourism and hospitality industries.

REPORTER:



[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That is correct, if they've been out of Victoria for 14 days, then they can apply for a border pass and travel to Queensland.

REPORTER:

How long is this going to be enforced? Have you got a date in mind, like the end of July that you might review it, or is it indefinite at this stage>

DEPUTY PREMIER:

All of these measure we review constantly. The measures we've announced today will be in place until the situation changes. I mentioned we were particularly concerned with that first seven to 10 days after the 10th, and so we may well assess the mandatory testing requirement at that point, or we might decide that it has been useful and keep it in place.

REPORTER:

If I fly into Melbourne – and why would I now – [inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Unless you're a Queenslander returning, yes.

REPORTER:

What is the logistics of that, is it literally police will march them back onto a plane, or if they refuse, physically refuse, will they be held in detention, or...?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I will let the police address that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Thanks DP. So people arrive and they have either their border declaration pass or not. So, we go through a process, depending on what declaration they have, or whether they don't have one. So of course if people are coming out of Victoria and they don't have that special exemption that the Chief Health Officer has referred to, or they not have a general pass for Queensland to come back, then we have a discussion around what is going to happen. As you've heard, if they are a person that has been in Victoira in the last 14 days, they will be turned around. They will not be permitted to come into Queensland and we have the authority to prevent that happening. So generally what happens is the person then has to wait at the airport to get the first available flight back. And there is logistics around that, if there is an overnight thing, we maintain a quarantine process with that and they are managed so that they can't get out into the community.

REPORTER:

[inaudible].

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

No, this is all contained at the airport, and of course this is what we've been doing since we started with the border controls and it is a very effective system that has been in place for some time.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

No, we haven't put anyone into detention centres yet, they're not criminals, this is an issue of public health so we're trying to work with them. And usually faced with the option of two weeks quarantine at their own expense, most choose to go back, but some as you heard the Deputy Premier say, some have decided that two weeks in quarantine in Queensland and then a holiday up here is better than six weeks lockdown in Melbourne, so that is just not on anymore.

REPORTER:

Of those numbers you mentioned, 15 I think chose quarantine at the road border, 200 at the airport, some of those presumably. Do you have a breakdown of how many are actually Victorians?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

No, we're not breaking them down at the moment.

REPORTER:

[inaudible].

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Most of the figures are Queenslanders coming back that have to go into mandatory quarantine.

REPORTER:

So this new thing announced, today [inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

So non-Queenslanders or those person without an exemption that been in Victoria in te last 14 days cannot come into Queensland.

REPORTER:

And so there is only a few who have chosen to [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

There has been some as we've said, as you've heard, 1000 have been turned around, so some have tried but not too many are getting through and none will get through as of today.

REPORTER:

Can you shed any light [inaudible] I understand there is a couple in Roma in quarantine [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

We have hotels right across the state, bearing in mind that we have airports that are reopening so each airport within regional Queensland is receiving flights, and we don't just look at flights out of Victoria, we look at transit flights as well.

REPORTER:

Do you know the circumstances of the couple from Roma?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

No, they would be people coming across the borders at Goondiwindi or somewhere like that. So we have a system in place where we are able to get them into quarantine and then maintain it. And they are under police management, all of those quarantine hotels.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, since last Friday how many people from say Victoria [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I don't have the exact number on me, but it is in the many hundreds.

REPORTER:

Oh, hundreds?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, but most are refused.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] get tougher?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, yes.

REPORTER:

When we talk about community transmission that Lane touched on, obviously now with New South Wales [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That is not community transmission because they know where those cases came from. They came from Victoria. So if you get transmission, so you have someone who has brought it in and then passed it on to other people – and even if you know that link that is not a problem – it is when you have cases just out of nowhere. So suddenly you find a case in Queensland, if

we were to find a case in Longreach and had no idea where that came from, a bit like when we had the case in Blackwater, we had no idea where it came from, that is really, really concerning because that means you've lost control of the outbreak.

REPORTER:

As you understand they haven't had any for a while in New South Wales?

DR YOUNG:

No they haven't, they have had total control of all their cases.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank you.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier and Health Minister Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 14 July 2020

Duration: 13 minutes 37 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well of the 3522 Queenslanders we tested in the last testing period, we again returned zero positive results. That is, all of those tests returned negative, meaning we still have just those four active cases. That compares to other states, now 18 active cases in New South Wales as of yesterday and in Victoria 1612 active cases, and of course we will monitor throughout the day the number of cases reported in those two states. I can also confirm that 18 Queenslanders who had visited the Crossroads Hotel have now been tested, the results of those tests are not yet back but we thank them for their assistance and for agreeing to be tested. The Chief Health Officer in a moment will outline her intention today to issue directions which will create hotspots – identify hotspots – in New South Wales in Campbelltown City and Liverpool City as a result of that Crossroads Hotel outbreak and she will outline for you what that means.

I can also announce today that this week in Parliament we will further strengthen our public health laws, further strengthen the powers available to the state to keep Queenslanders safe. Right now, the maximum penalty on the spot for breaching our public health orders is \$4003, but in some cases that fine appears to not be a sufficient penalty. Perhaps people from other states think they might get away without having to pay for it, perhaps people think that \$4000 is worth it to come to Queensland, worth the risk. So this week we will move amendments that will allow us to apply a penalty of imprisonment for breaches of those health directions. So the maximum penalty on the spot will be \$4003, or up to six months' imprisonment and I hope that that will demonstrate to the public just how serious we are about enforcing these measures; just how serious it is that everyone complies with them and just how serious the penalty might be if they fail to do so.

DR YOUNG:

Today in Queensland there are 18 people who visited the Crossroads Hotel in New South Wales and came forward and have been tested. They're all now in home quarantine. As of midday today, I have now declared that Campbelltown City and Liverpool [inaudible] those areas in the previous 14 days and comes into Queensland will need to go into mandatory hotel quarantine. This is important because we are seeing continued numbers of cases being confirmed who attended that hotel, and we have seen subsequent infections in families and other groups from people who have come into contact with people who went to that hotel. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Chief Health Officer, so does that mean that Queenslanders travel to those areas, when they come back, they will have to go into hotel quarantine, or can Queenslanders go into home quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

As of midday today, Queenslanders who travel to either of those hotspots or any of the hotspots in Victoria – and today all of Victoria is deemed a hotspot – will need to, when they come back into Queensland, go into 14 days quarantine in a hotel.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] New South Wales, is that going to be something you're looking at coming days, like you've said about Victoria? If it gets...

DR YOUNG:

Yes, I am looking at the whole country every single day. I meet with my colleagues from around Australia every day and we talk about outbreaks that are happening in their states.

REPORTER:

The 18 people that are here now, who have been to the Crossroads Hotel, are they Queenslanders or are they people who were coming here to holiday from other states?

DR YOUNG:

I don't have that specific information, but all of them, I am very, very grateful to. They came forward and they said they had been to the hotel and they got tested.

REPORTER:

Is that the total number of people you know who are currently in Queensland who have been in the hotel and do you anticipate that number to grow at all?

DR YOUNG:

I do anticipate it to grow. Yes. That is the total I know of at this point in time.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, the threshold you have to reach to declare a hotspot, what are you looking at?

DR YOUNG:

It is when there is clearly growing number of cases and there is community acquisition of cases. So we've seen that here. We've seen initial cases of people who went to that hotel on the 3rd of July, and then we've seen subsequent infections from those cases.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, can you explain Dannii Minogue and her son were given an exemption?

DR YOUNG:

They weren't given an exemption. They are required to quarantine in a different place. So the default arrangement in Queensland is if you don't have a COVID Safe Plan, or an industry plan or an exemption to hotel quarantine, then you go into hotel quarantine. There are a large number of different groups that have exemptions to hotel quarantine. For instance, consular officials, ADF personnel, people who work in the oil and gas industry who meet certain requirements, maritime workers, flight crew, people who work in specific film and entertainment industry, elite sporting groups, so there are a number of groups and I believe I have given 38 such exemptions to date for mandatory hotel quarantine, but they need to then quarantine in another place that I am satisfied adheres to the same requirements.

REPORTER:

Given some of the heartbreaking stories we've had when you've had to wrestle with people who have had dying family members, can you assure people that there's no special treatment for a celebrity?

DR YOUNG:

No, there's no special treatment for anyone. I do ensure that anyone who's struggling with hotel quarantine gets support, and we have support arrangements in place for that situation.

REPORTER:

So just to be clear on that, is that because she's a judge on a show that she's been granted this other quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

No, she has a COVID Safe Plan that is being managed by an independent third party. That's the reason that she got that exemption.

REPORTER:

That's obviously not incurring any charges because it's her own accommodation, is that right?

DR YOUNG:

It's not incurring any charges to the State, the Queensland Government. She's funding all those arrangements.

REPORTER:

She got it because she works in the entertainment industry – you mentioned the entertainment industry, you mentioned that as an industry, is that right?

DR YOUNG:

Yeah. There are a number of people who have come under that category who I have given an exemption to because they have third party arrangements in place that I'm confident meet all the requirements that we have in place for hotel quarantine.

REPORTER:

How serious would it need to get in New South Wales before the border closed to them?

DR YOUNG:

Well it depends where we see these clusters go. So at the moment they're all been followed up by New South Wales Health, so it will depend whether they start seeing broader spread outside that area.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, 18 Queenslanders, you said that they were in home quarantine, currently. Given that they were at a known hotspot now, why are they not in hotel quarantine or in better isolation than just at home?

DR YOUNG:

Yep. So that will be brought in from midday today.

REPORTER:

But given the cluster would it not be more prudent to isolate them further?

DR YOUNG:

Well actually I'm not concerned about this group. This group came forward voluntarily and said they'd been there and got tested, so I'm quite comfortable that they understand the risk, they've been spoken with and so I'm comfortable that they're fine in home quarantine. This is about people coming across the border in the future.

REPORTER:

Does that mean that the rule from now on in terms of anyone coming from any state is that if they have been to a hotspot or they're sick, they home quarantine versus hotel quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

No. I've only declared those hotspots at midday today. As happened with Victoria, that declaration was made at a point in time and people after that point in time had to go into hotel quarantine.

REPORTER:

That remains the same for Victorian then, this is just... the home quarantine is specific for people in the New South Wales hotspots, is that right?

DR YOUNG:

No. Sorry, I've not been clear. So once a declaration is made that a part of Australia is now a hotspot, once that declaration comes into force anyone who has been in that area within the previous 14 days and they come into Queensland after the declaration is made, they are then required to go into hotel quarantine. Is that clear?

REPORTER:

I'll just ask her after.

DR YOUNG:

No, no. If I've not made it clear that's my fault.

REPORTER:

I just don't understand. So the people who have come from New South Wales, they're allowed to quarantine at home, but people coming from Victoria can quarantine at a hotel, or is it just everyone's at home now?

DR YOUNG:

No. So as of midday today, so in a couple of hours' time, anyone who comes from a declared hotspot must quarantine in a hotel. New South Wales is only being made a declared hotspot at midday today. So Victoria has been a declared hotspot since last week, so all of the people who have been in Victoria have to quarantine in a hotel.

REPORTER:

So why are there 18 people allowed to quarantine at home?

DR YOUNG:

Because it's not yet a declared hotspot. It won't be a declared hotspot until midday, three hours' time.

REPORTER:

Just to confirm, it's just those two suburbs?

DR YOUNG:

Two cities. Campbelltown City and Liverpool City.

REPORTER:

So is it the council area?

DR YOUNG:

The local government authority, yes.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, on those 38 cases you've provided exemptions, speaking broadly rather than those specific cases, can you sort of paint a picture of the medical threshold that you're looking in terms of seriousness of medical condition?

DR YOUNG:

I don't provide exemptions on medical grounds. I provide exemptions because I'm confident that the process they've put in place will adequately protect the Queensland community if any of the people who were in quarantine were to be positive. It's not on health grounds or medical grounds, it's because the system they've got in place is adequate. There have been a

few cases where I've provided exemptions from hotel quarantine because of extreme mental health risks.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, just on the up to six months' imprisonment – is that only for people who don't fill out the border declaration properly or is that for under directions as well?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That penalty will be available to enforce any of the health directions. It will be an additional tool available to our public health officers as well as police enforcing the directions.

REPORTER:

Just on John-Paul Langbroek's photo. What did you think of that? Did you think that was undermining the message a bit?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah, I thought that was pretty disappointing, a bit reckless. I guess it demonstrates that some members of the LNP perhaps aren't taking this as seriously as they should be. I think I was fairly measured in the comments that I made about it in asking for him to apologise. I think it was disappointing that he didn't. I guess it's now up to the Opposition Leader to determine what's appropriate.

REPORTER:

Minister, what would you say to the Queenslanders who have seen the situation with Dannii Minogue? They're having to quarantine in the hotels, they feel hard done by that perhaps a celebrity is getting better treatment than they are.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look I understand why it might look that way and why some might portray it that way. As I understand, from the advice that Dr Young has provided to me, the quarantine arrangements in place in this instance mirror if not greater than the arrangements in the hotel quarantine. They incorporate contract security as well as testing, and so those requirements will ensure that Queenslanders are kept safe. They are being administered by a trusted third party all at her own expense.

REPORTER:

Does the requirement to be monitored by... I mean, if you're saying they're stronger – we're seeing ADF and police at hotels – does that mean that they're being monitored by the police and the ADF or is someone guarding that house to make sure they don't leave?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Do you want to talk to this one?

DR YOUNG:



So that independent third party is responsible for ensuring that the individual maintains quarantine.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Format: Press conference

Topic: COVID-19 update

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles
Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 24 July 2020

Duration: 19:59 minutes

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Good Morning. Today we're confirming two new cases of COVID-19 here in Queensland. Both are in quarantine and pose no further risk to the Queensland community. In the last reporting period we tested 6228 Queenslanders. We remain at two hospital in patients here in the state. Our total number of cases now sits at 1076.

You will have seen yesterday the Chief Health Officer listed an additional hotspot in New South Wales – Fairfield – bringing to three the number of local government areas considered hotspots in New South Wales. That's in addition to all of Victoria being considered a hotspot and so anyone who travels through those locations if they are Queenslanders will be required to go into hotel quarantine. If they are not a Queenslander they will be turned around. We continue to very closely monitor the situation in Victoria and New South Wales and we'll add hotspots if and when required. In New South Wales there are those two outbreaks related to The Crossroads Hotel where there are now at least 56 confirmed cases and the Thai Rock restaurant where there are now 46 cases.

So a large number of the cases in New South Wales are sourced from a pub and a restaurant and for that reason the Chief Health Officer will shortly outline some small changes to the arrangements for pubs, clubs, café's and licensed venues. I want to say to those venues here in Queensland that they have been doing just a tremendous job. It's not always been easy to comply with the restrictions that we have put in place but those restrictions are precisely what has kept Queenslanders safe and I want to thank them for limiting their numbers, for enforcing social distancing, for collecting the contact details of their patrons.

All of that work is incredibly important. But each and every one of us, every single Queensland, when we go those venues, we also have an obligation to comply with those restrictions. We all have an obligation to each other and under the law to maintain our social distance and the arrangements that the Chief Health Officer will outline in terms of providing seating, the responsibility on venues to provide seating and the responsibility on patrons to use those seats are important and will be enforced. I will ask the Chief Health Officer to add to what I have had to say.



DR YOUNG:

Thank you very much Deputy Premier. Good morning. So new news overnight, excellent news overnight. We've had two new cases but both in hotel quarantine and that shows that our quarantine process is working. So, it is really important. I know how hard it is for those people who are there in quarantine, having to stay there for 14 days, but it is absolutely critical to the safety of Queenslanders. So anyone who comes from overseas needs to be in quarantine and now anyone from Victoria or people who have been in Victoria and those three areas of New South Wales, Campbelltown, Liverpool and Fairfield. So anyone who has been in those places in the previous 14 days needs to go into hotel quarantine so that we can manage them, and we ask those people to undergo a test as soon as possible after they get into quarantine, and then at day 10 or 11, and that is what has happened with these two cases. At day 11, they have tested positive so now we can work with them and make sure they get the best possible care that Queensland can provide and we know Queensland can provide excellent care.

Unfortunately, we have had six deaths to date, but we have had 15 people in ICU and of those 15 people, only one person unfortunately died so we have very good care in Queensland. The quicker we can find people who are positive, the best for themselves, for their own health, for their family so they don't spread it and for the community, and that is why I think those 6200 Queenslanders who got tested yesterday. And the people who got tested the day before, and before. That is the most important thing all of us can do to protect ourselves, our families and our communities. The first sign of being unwell, to isolate yourself immediately and get tested, because my aim is that we find the first case in a cluster. Not the 65th case in the cluster because if you find them at 65, it's very, very, very hard to control and we will have to immediately put restrictions back on everyone. So although I know this very difficult for the industry – for hotels, pubs, clubs, nightclubs to go back.

For the last three weeks patrons have been allowed to stand although we've still asked them to maintain the one person per four square metres, we need to send a very, very clear signal out there to everyone....because it's hard when you're out there enjoying yourself, having a few drinks with your friends, it's really hard to maintain that social distancing. I struggle because I know my normal safe area that I'm in...you know we all have that safe feeling of how close we want to be to people. 1.5 metres is not normal. It is a really hard thing to do. It is very difficult so we need to have those signals so I do ask that everyone – when you go into a facility that you take a seat. Because that reminds you to keep your distance from other people and I thank all of those venues for doing that because I know it is very hard. It is difficult for them. To go and have those tables and chairs but it's so much easier to have them because you can spread them out through a venue. And that really encourages and reminds people to maintain that distance. So people can still go up to the bar to buy their drink but then they need to go back to their table. Or if the bar has got chairs along the bar as part of that one per four square metre density requirement then they can sit at the bar.

But people have really got to take this so seriously because we are at a really very difficult stage. We have seen what's happened in Victoria and New South Wales with just a few cases that's got out of hand and they're struggling to variable degrees of success to manage that. We really need to be prepared for if we get a case in Queensland so that we can manage it.

And today we're seeing people going about their normal lives which of course, needs to happen and it's great to see, but it does leave us vulnerable. So there are still certain things that we must have in place. People must get tested as soon as they develop symptoms and isolate themselves. I can't over emphasise that. People must wash their hands regularly. That's really important because we know how easy this virus can spread from surfaces. Then people must maintain that 1.5 metre distance. That's really important. Wherever possible to do that.

REPORTER:

There seems to be a little bit of alarm bell ringing there. Are you more concerned now than you were a fortnight ago given what's happened in New South Wales?

DR YOUNG:

I am much more concerned. Yes. I think this is a time for all of us to be concerned. I really think this is a time for people to think twice before they travel interstate to either New South Wales or Victoria. If they go to Victoria they'll have to quarantine when they come back. New South Wales it depends where you go but there are more cases happening throughout New South Wales and we're keeping a very, very close eye on every single one of those cases. And while we can keep an eye on every single one of those cases it means that we don't have to consider closing to those communities when we can't see every case. That's when we'll be putting out a message. This time round we could give people three days notice. So the border will close to people who've been in Fairfield at 1am on Monday morning. So my advice is, if you don't wish to spend two weeks in a hotel that you come back home to Queensland before then. We've been able to do that because New South Wales has a significant degree of control at the moment. If that changes next time I mightn't be able to give that notice. It might be anyone who's travelled in that area will immediately be required to quarantine when they come back into Queensland.

REPORTER:

The warning about bars and nightclubs seems to be directed at young people. Is there a perception amongst the young that they're immune from coronavirus?

DR YOUNG:

There is, I think, there is that perception. Younger people are feeling that if they get this they'll get a mild disease and fortunately, in the majority that is true. But now that this virus has been circulating in the world for over six months we're getting more and more information about it every single day and we're starting to see that's not always the case. That young people can die from it. It's not common but they can. And also young people can get a persistent disease – again, not common. But we are starting to see people who have totally cleared the virus. They are no longer excreting it – we know that because we test them, but they are having continuing symptoms and problems because this virus attaches to cells throughout the body, not just in the lungs and in the airways – throughout the body. So you can get ongoing renal failure and need dialysis. You can get ongoing heart failure, lung failure. So there are other problems. It is not flu – I can't overemphasize this – this is not flu. When people get flu, some unfortunately die and it is always of course very tragic. But most

people who get flu, they might be sick but they fully recover. That is not always the case for this virus. You can get it and not fully recover. And we know that. There are lots of viruses that do that to you, but this one in particular. And so that is something to keep in mind. This is not a virus I want to get. I absolutely don't want to get it. So I would recommend to everyone out there, this is not a virus that you want to get.

REPORTER:

Have you recommended, or been close to recommending to the government in the last few days closing the borders again to New South Wales?

DR YOUNG:

I did recommend that we should close to Fairfield because of those increasing cases at the Thai Rock restaurant. I think that is important. And I am keeping a very, very close eye every single day on how New South Wales is responding and their capacity to respond. New South Wales is doing an enormous amount of testing – up to 20,000-30,000 people every single day. So that reassures me.

REPORTER:

Since the decision was made to sort of open the borders, have you recommended that the borders should be shut again?

DR YOUNG:

To Victoria, yes. And to New South Wales, to those three...

REPORTER:

Beyond that?

DR YOUNG:

No. Not beyond that, no.

REPORTER:

And you were saying telling people to sit. Is that a request or are you telling them. Is there going to be a new restriction on that? Do you know what I mean? Is it friendly advice or a new regulation?

DR YOUNG:

No. It is a requirement, and there will be compliance.

REPORTER:

And it starts now?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. It starts as soon as those venues will get those tables and chairs, and they will be doing that today.

REPORTER:

So, since they reopened people have been allowed to stand around and have a drink?

DR YOUNG:

For the last three weeks. So there was a change around three weeks ago allowing people to stand – not changing the density requirements – so still one person per four square metres, or one per two up to a cap of 50 in smaller venues. So the density requirement didn't change, but people could stand. Now because we are more worried, as you can tell, about what is happening in southern states I think we need to go back and just enforce it. I just think it is so hard to ask people to come into a venue with their friends, have a few drinks, be casual, to remember to maintain that social distancing. It is so much easier if you are seated. Like looking at this room – much easier when you are seated because then you do maintain that distance.

REPORTER:

Then you are effectively rescinding permission, if you like, for people to stand and consume a beverage in an establishment. You are effectively rescinding that?

DR YOUNG:

That is correct. Yes. Well, I am reimposing that restriction that we had up to three weeks ago.

REPORTER:

You mention that you would like people to reconsider travelling to New South Wales. Would it be your advice or your preference for people not to go to New South Wales?

DR YOUNG:

No. I think people need to make decisions. I think everyone is an adult and can make those decisions, but they need to make them understanding what that decision means. So they need to think, right I'm going to go to New South Wales. What would happen if on my return I have to go into hotel quarantine for two weeks? So they need to know that and use that as part of their decision making.

REPORTER:

Are you able to elaborate on any of the other areas in New South Wales that you are currently concerned about?

DR YOUNG:

Well I've been looking at Bateman's Bay. So we know there were some cases there. But we also know that there has been an enormous amount of testing by, not only New South Wales, but also by the ACT, because there are a lot of people who go from the ACT to Bateman's Bay and we have not seen ongoing cases. Then there is also the Hunter Region in Port Stephens, there's been some cases there. So there has been some cases popping up, but they have been a few cases and there has been a lot of testing done by New South Wales as a response, which is very, very reassuring.

REPORTER:

How is our testing rate at the moment in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

Excellent. I set all of our hospital and health services a target of 0.1 per cent of the population to be tested every single day, which is 5000 people, and they have exceeded it. So yesterday – 6200, the day before – 6700. They have done a really, really good job.

REPORTER:

The police said this morning that they would expect all these sort of restrictions to last at least another six months. What do you think, and how long will Queenslanders have to live like this?

DR YOUNG:

I would love to know how long, and I am sure every single Queensland – in fact, I suspect anyone in the world would love to know that – but we just don't know. We need to be prepared. I think the best way to do is, as the police have said, be prepared for it to last another six months. And then if it doesn't we can all celebrate. I think that is probably a much better way to do it, but it is really, really difficult for people.

REPORTER:

And can we get the DP on the AFL announcement this morning?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We could. Is that that there is a game in Cairns?

REPORTER:

The Cairns thing. That you got more games and more teams up there? Is that right?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I am not across the detail of that announcement, but if there is one good thing that has come of this it is the amount of extra sport that Queenslanders get to see, and it is fantastic to see it being shared around the state. I know folk in Cairns will get out and support those AFL team.

REPORTER:

Is it extra games and you are hosting two AFL teams for up to a month? I'm trying to help you.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

[Laughter] Understandably, I'm focused on the coronavirus cases here and in other states, but it is wonderful to have more AFL teams here. It is wonderful to have them playing in the regions. It is great to have both teams based and playing in Cairns. I know Cairns folk love their sport, love their footy, and they will enjoy going to those games. Is that enough for you Patrick?



REPORTER:

We got that. Yep.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Goodo.

REPORTER:

Have there been any issues with emergency vehicles getting caught in the congestion at the border?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Not that I am aware of, but I'll ask the Chief Health Officer.

DR YOUNG:

No.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No.

DR YOUNG:

So, the police have been managing our border absolutely brilliantly, and there are various people that they just allow through. So that is in place now.

REPORTER:

What would it take to make Greater Sydney a hotspot?

DR YOUNG:

Uncontrolled spread of cases, as we have seen in Victoria.

REPORTER:

But there is no sign of that as yet, despite the spot fires around...?

DR YOUNG:

Not yet, no. No. So we are just taking it day by day. So I speak to my colleagues at midday every single day, seven days a week. And I get the details of every single case. So they are having 15, 18, 14 cases in those numbers each day, up to 20. And I know all 20, where they are and where they have acquired it from.

REPORTER:

And just on the supercars proposal in Townsville. Have you approved that for 10,000 spectators?

DR YOUNG:

I am not across that detail. I do apologise. So we are getting a lot of these sorts of proposals, which is fantastic. We are getting them from all sorts of areas, like from the netball and, as we heard, the AFL and supercars, and we are just working that through as a process just to make sure that it is done in a safe way. But yes, stadiums can have today up to 50 per cent of their capacity filled. So that is in place because we know that stadiums are not a significant risk because they are outdoors. So we know that people are outdoors that there isn't nearly the same risk as indoors, which is the other reason why we have really had to go and work hard with the pubs and clubs and hotels about that one per four square metre. There is not nearly the same degree of concern for outdoors.

REPORTER:

Just for the DP. On the trains, the government has taken some action after the move by the US to link, I think, the parts manufacturer to slave labour?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Obviously these allegations of human rights abuses are abhorrent and very concerning. I am advised that the Department of Transport and Main Roads is urgently reviewing all of its contracts to determine if any of these companies are associated with any current work, and we'll take all appropriate steps.

REPORTER:

Can you do anything if it was put in the train years ago? You're not going to go and rip up the trains are you?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Obviously the focus of this will be on any ongoing work, whether any ongoing contracts are let to these companies. Where there is evidence of human rights abuses, that would be very, very concerning to us. And that is why that urgent investigation is underway.

REPORTER:

Are you concerned that DFAT or another Commonwealth agency had nothing to say in terms of advising the Queensland Government on that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We would look to those agencies for that advice – certainly that is their job – and now that we have been alerted to this situation we are taking all of the appropriate steps, investigating urgently to see whether any of our work, any of our contracts are associated with these companies.

REPORTER:

Thank you very much.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank you.



Released under RTI - DPC

Type: Press conference

Speakers: Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young and Deputy Commissioner Steve Gollschewski

Date: 29 July 2020

Duration: 18 minutes 25 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Good morning. Here in Queensland we haven't had a new case of COVID-19 outside of quarantine since May, today we are confirming two new cases of COVID-19 here. Both likely acquired the disease interstate, they have a history of interstate travel. That brings our total number of cases to 1078, four now in hospital, seven of them active. Both of the new cases are 19 year old women, one from Logan, one from Acacia Ridge, they are both now being cared for at the PA Hospital. They both travelled together recently, including returning to Brisbane from Melbourne on the 21st of July via Sydney. They travelled on flights VA863 and VA977. The Queensland Health contact tracers are identifying close contacts from those flights. One of them works at Parkland Christian College and you will have seen that families were notified of that potential exposure last night, I understand an event that was planned last night was cancelled and that the school is now closed while a deep clean of the school is undertaken. Close contacts at the school are being identified, testing capability will be set up at the school and be operational this afternoon. Rapid testing capability will now be deployed right throughout the region. These young women have gone about their business within the communities that they live in and so there will be a large amount of contact tracing to be done. Largely within the Logan and Springfield areas including shopping malls, restaurants and a church. Our contact tracers are doing that work right now. There are also a number of close contacts in both of their households that will now be ordered to quarantine. The most important message here is that anyone with any concern on the southside of Brisbane, but particularly in those Logan and Springfield Lakes regions should go and get tested. We have responded in Queensland to situations like this before. The Cairns pathology lab, the North Rockhampton Nursing Home, and because of our responses we have been able to contain cases like this and restrict, suppress any community transmission and we will do what we did there, and everything that we learned from those situations, now to respond to these two new cases. The whole of our system will be mobilised. The Chief Health Officer will provide more details about other precautions that she is putting in place, including locking down aged care facilities in the metro south region. We've seen in other states that the most important thing are in the period while we see if there is any other community transmission is making sure that nobody in an aged care facility is exposed. This is clearly an evolving situation, we'll do our best to provide you with information as we have it to hand, but today a lot of people will be interviewed by our public health staff and in some cases by police. And it is

absolutely critical that we speak to is fulsome and honest with our staff. The impacts of breaking the COVID rules and the impacts of being dishonest and exposing people to this virus can be massive. We may have to, in addition to closing schools and locking down aged care facilities, we may need to close shopping centres and restaurants and churches, that is the kind of impact people can have here. And so it is absolutely critical that every person we contact, every person we speak to provides us with the information we need and quarantines if they are requested to do so. If there is anyone with any doubt about whether they might have been exposed to this virus, they must go and get tested. Go and get tested today. We will ensure there is extra testing capability that anyone, that anyone who needs to get tested can and should, for their own sake, for their families sake and also for the members of their communities who they could expose to this virus.

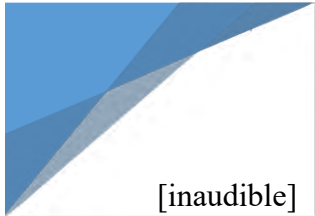
DR YOUNG:

Well it is very disappointing that this has occurred. So two young women returned from Melbourne, which we know is an absolutely hotspot with a lot of cases, returned from Melbourne on the 21st of July via Sydney and have now tested positive. As a result of that, a lot of people are going to be inconvenienced and I do apologies to those people for what is now going to have to occur. But we know if we act really fast now, we can stop this spreading further and cause even more inconvenience to a lot of people. So there are going to be shopping centres, a school, restaurants, they are all going to be closed now for at least 48 hours while we arrange a deep clean of those facilities and contact trace people who attended. Then also I have asked that all of the aged care facilities in the metro south area be closed to visitors, to have enhanced screening of staff and that staff aren't to work across multiple facilities. We need to act really, really fast. These two young women have been out in the community for eight days whilst unwell. So please, anyone who lives in that Logan, Acacia Ridge, Springfield Lakes areas, if you have any symptoms at all or if you're concerned, please come forward immediately and get tested. There will be additional fever clinics put in place, but please, see your own GP, go to one of the fever clinics that are there and get yourself tested as soon as possible. And if you're unwell, stay at home and isolate yourself, that is the way that we can all work together to stop this further spreading.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Good morning everyone. As you've heard from the Deputy Premier and the Chief Health Officer, our primary focus at the moment is to track down anyone that has been exposed to this and make sure that we can identify them. We are using all of our government arrangements, including our disaster management frameworks to assist Health to do that. We will make sure that the priority is to identify and eliminate any further transmission of COVID in that area. I can also say to you that there is an investigation that is going on into the circumstances of these two young women coming back from Victoria into Queensland, including the way they got through the border and the fact that they were in the community for eight days when they should've been quarantined and now the investigation will examine that and at the end of the day we'll make an appropriate decision around what should happen with that.

REPORTER:



[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

At this stage of the initial investigations indicate there are incorrect details on border declaration passes and we're still trying to examine all of those facts and obtain the border declaration passes. The investigation will look at whether that was deliberate or otherwise.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Our concern, of course, is that these people were able to get through the border, ostensibly not looking as if they had been in Victoria, but the investigation indicates they have been in Victoria.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

I am not going to get into what they've done, an investigation will determine that.

REPORTER:

Steve, do we know [inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

This is very early days so we're working with the interstate authorities around what has occurred in the other states, indeed, to track these people's movements and see what they've actually done.

REPORTER:

Do we know why they were in Melbourne?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

No, can't answer that at this stage.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

So we're getting all that detail now, of course, and we'll put that out and we'll put out a press release later this afternoon listing all of the places that these two women have been to.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

She is a cleaner. I don't have the details of the other. We've only just got that positive result on the second individual before this press conference, so we're getting all that information.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I don't know how many there are in metro south, but it would be quite a number. It is just very precautionary, there is absolutely nothing at this point of time suggesting that either of these two individuals have visited any aged care facility, but just in case one of them has come into contact with someone who then goes to an aged care facility. Just because we know how vulnerable those people are, so I am asking them just for the next 48 hours until we get more information just to limit any risks.

REPORTER:

Can you clarify, have they been out and about for eight whole days [inaudible] lie about it [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I don't know what they've said when they've been out and about, but they've been out and about for eight days, with symptoms.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Anyone can attend anywhere, but we will be putting in place more fever clinics, so I would recommend at this point in time that people only go to the school fever clinic if they go to that school, because their highest risk, because the individual was a cleaner cleaning all through that school, so I would prefer that people use that fever clinic if they've been at the school.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

They are in two households.

REPORTER:

How many of their close contacts have now been quarantined, and where have they been quarantined?

DR YOUNG:

At this point in time they are in their home but I am organising them to go into hotels.

REPORTER:

How would you describe their behaviour?

DR YOUNG:

I am very, very disappointed. I think it was reckless.

REPORTER:

When was it known... it was known early yesterday afternoon, why was this not announced yesterday afternoon?

DR YOUNG:

We immediately, with the first individual, went to the school and worked with the school and since then we've been gathering more information overnight and then this morning we got the second test result of her friend. So we only got that result this morning because she was a close contact.

REPORTER:

Was she made to have a test, the first woman, or did she go and have one?

DR YOUNG:

No, she went and had the test.

REPORTER:

How many days does it [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It took quite a number of days, yes.

REPORTER:

South Australia has closed their border to even people who live in South Australia, returning from Victoria, are you looking at anything like that?

DR YOUNG:

We already have closed our border to anyone who visits Victoria. You are required, when you enter Queensland to go into quarantine. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter if you're a Queensland or you're someone from any other state. If you've been in Victoria, you're required to quarantine in a hotel.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes, that is correct.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] there are flaws within the border declaration [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We need people to tell the truth, that is all I can say. This is being done to protect yourself as an individual, your family, the community, people must always tell the truth, whether it is filling out a border declaration, whether it is talking to a contact tracing officer, that is absolutely critical.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] closing the borders now that this has happened, how much has this now put a situation where closing the borders [inaudible] a real possibility?

DR YOUNG:

Our border is already closed to Victoria. So if you have been to Victoria for any reason in the previous 14 days, when you cross the border into Queensland you are required, with very, very few exemptions, to go into quarantine, hotel quarantine.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Absolutely. Every single day I do look, with a lot of detail, at all of the cases in the rest of the country and see their impact on Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It is a matter of what sort of cases, it is a matter of whether they know where they've come from, it is a matter of how far they are from other cases, there are so many variables, it is really hard to pick out one factor, it is about all of those factors and that is the decision making that happens each day.

REPORTER:

Steve, [inaudible] How are you feeling?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

As Jeanette says, this is very disappointing that we have to get to this stage. Can I just tell you that this is a criminal investigation that we're conducting, so I am constrained around what I'll say about that at this stage. So, the investigations are about ascertaining the truth. So we want to work out what has actually happened here, not only in terms of what any individual may have done but also how the system has operated and see whether there is things we need to consider. So we will do that very thoroughly and very quickly. But we've had over 1.1 million people get border declaration passes and the vast majority of people do the right thing. What this highlights is why it is so important that everyone engages with that and does the right thing. The whole point of coming back from Victoria is because there is so much community transmission down there, you're putting everyone at risk if you don't declare that and certainly there are systems in place to help people get through that. So you get tested and you go through quarantine and then everything is okay if you're clear.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

I think we have been struggling with that for a long time, Lane. I would say to everyone is that you need to think about those around you rather than just yourself because it is not... they just don't know necessarily whether they are sick or whether they have COVID. It is not until they are tested and that's confirmed that's what happened. So people need to think about others and not just themselves.

REPORTER:

Do you know long they'd been in Victoria for?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

I'm not going to get into the details of that. It is still early days, we are still engaging with the Victorian authorities around what we can find out from there. So that's all part of the investigation.

REPORTER:

Do you know why they were in Melbourne?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

No, I'm not going to get into that.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, would you advise people in some parts of Brisbane to start wearing masks?

DR YOUNG:

No. We don't have community transmission at this point. What I do advise people to do is get tested, that is the most important thing they can do for themselves and for the rest of the community. If they have got any symptoms at all or a fever, even a history of a fever, to immediately come forward and get tested and isolate themselves until they get that test result. If everyone in the southern part of Brisbane absolutely commits to do that today, then we will all be a lot safer. That is far, far more effective than wearing masks.

REPORTER:

That cleaner, she was working at the school last week as well. How many days did she turn up to work?

DR YOUNG:

A number of days, yep.

REPORTER:

How many employees are isolating now as a result of her?

DR YOUNG:

I don't have that information but the whole school is closed.

REPORTER:

We heard her mother perhaps worked at the school as well. Is that the case?

DR YOUNG:

I believe so, yes.

REPORTER:

And she's been tested?

DR YOUNG:

Oh yes, we're testing everyone in her family and the other lady's family.

REPORTER:

Do any of the close contacts have symptoms at this stage?

DR YOUNG:

I don't have that full information.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I don't know.

REPORTER:

On the closure of aged care facilities. Will the Government reveal the internal quarantine procedures [inaudible] similar outbreak we've seen in Victoria?

DR YOUNG:

We've put in place plans for our aged care facilities right from day one. So we have rapid response plans. Just remember we don't have a case in an aged care facility today. This is all about preventing a case. So we're just taking that very precautionary response that we had right at the start of the pandemic. So right at the start of the pandemic we put processes in place for aged care facilities – so they didn't have visitors, so they checked staff. I'm just making sure that they put all of that back in place until we know what we're doing.



REPORTER:

Are you worried there may be others in the community who have lied as well and are out there [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I'm always worried about that. I think the vast majority of Queenslanders have done a brilliant response and that is why we have not had cases. It is very disappointing about these two cases, but I have a lot of confidence that the community will do what is needed today. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk
Deputy Premier Steven Miles
Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young
Queensland Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll
Queensland Police Deputy Commissioner Steve Gollschewski

Date: 30 July 2020

Duration:

E&OE

PREMIER:

Good morning everyone. So I might report on the cases overnight. So we've had three new cases. We've had one which is an international arrival who was in hotel quarantine and we've had two others that were a couple from Brisbane who attended the Apollo restaurant in Sydney, came back from Sydney and self-isolated. So that is very good news about what that couple did and it is a lesson to everyone about how we have to treat this very seriously. Yesterday, Queensland Health carried out more than 6800 tests and almost a thousand of them were in the Metro South area and the Deputy Premier and the Chief Health Officer will discuss that in a little bit more detail. But can I from the outset commend both health and the police for the rapid response that they have been deploying over the last 24 hours. This is exactly the scenario that we have been planning and the rapid response is exceptional.

So I just want to make a few comments to Queenslanders as well. During this time, we need to make sure that everyone is doing the right thing. We need to make sure that if you are sick, you are getting tested and I want everyone to listen to Dr Young and if you're sick, stay-at-home, do not go to work. It is absolutely vital. You must keep up that social distancing. If you're going to a shopping centre and you are seeing people not social distancing, you should leave. Now is not the time to be in extremely large gatherings where people are not social distancing. We really want people to come and get tested, especially in the Brisbane area, if they have symptoms whatsoever. But we are very...in terms of what has happened overnight, that is the best scenario we could have hoped for after all of that testing was carried out. But of course, testing is indeed important. The Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner will address the issues of the three women that were involved in coming back from Melbourne so they will address that. And of course, we declared yesterday that Greater Sydney a hot spot that will take effect from 1am on Saturday. I think you can see from the couple that have come back from that Apollo restaurant. That is definitely the right decision that we have made to protect Queensland and Queenslanders health. I'll hand over to the

Deputy Premier to say a few more comments and then Dr Young, and then the Police Commissioner and our Deputy Police Commissioner. Thanks Steven.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So the three additional cases of COVID-19 that we are reporting here in Queensland today brings our total now to 1082. 11 of those are active and five are in hospital. The three new cases are unrelated to the cases were reported yesterday. First, a man in his 20s who had returned from the United States and was in quarantine, and a couple who had eaten at the Apollo restaurant in Potts Point in Sydney which is a known cluster, an identified cluster. They had chosen to self-isolate and I thank them for that decision. It has kept Queenslanders safe. The fact that two of these three new cases came from Sydney, as well as the fact that two of the cases were reported yesterday had transited through Sydney underlines how important it is that we have made that decision to declare greatest Sydney as a hot spot. It will allow us to control cases returning from Sydney where we know that there are outbreaks. That means it was the right decision.

I want to thank the 979 people in the south side of Brisbane who went and got tested yesterday. That's a fourfold increase in the average number of tests we normally do in Metro South and it is exactly how we will ensure that we do not have community transmission from the cases there. 255 of those were tested at the school where we know one of those active cases had been. There are now six locations in Metro South where people can get tested. We tested 6826 people yesterday and all of the other tests were negative. That really is the best we could have hoped for in the first 24 hours of our rapid response to those new cases and we would certainly hope to see another 24 hours like that. A lot of tests. If there is anyone else out there who has been infected, we want to find them.

There are 94 aged care facilities in the south side of Brisbane that are now locked down to visitors until we ensure that there is no risk of them being infected. Police believe they have now identified all three Queenslanders who were at that party in Melbourne. We don't think there are any others. We have now translated the health advice from yesterday into tenant different languages. The Chief Health Officer has met with community leaders, multicultural leaders. We want to ensure that everyone in Queensland, no matter where they are, what community they identify with, what language group they identify with, that everyone in Queensland knows what they can do to keep themselves and their community safe. First and foremost, that is go and get tested. If they have any doubt at all, any reason at all, they should go and get tested. We are just beginning to hear reports out of Victoria that they may have a record number of cases to report today and so we continue to monitor what is happening in other states very carefully. But it underlines how now is not the time to travel. Any travel that can be avoided should be avoided. We want to do everything we can to keep Queenslanders safe.

DR YOUNG:

So in Queensland we had three new cases yesterday. Two of them in women who had been down to Victoria and one of them it was the sister of one of those two women. We've had no further cases related to that cluster but it is important that we keep on testing and we keep on being alert to more cases. Then today, we have had three new cases. One, a gentleman who

recently returned from the United States and was in hotel quarantine, and two in a couple who recently returned from Sydney and they had chosen themselves to go into quarantine in their home. At the stage when they returned, Sydney was not regarded as a hot spot. So that was an excellent response by those people. As of 1am Saturday, all the metropolitan Sydney and some of the surrounding areas have been declared a hot spot, meaning anyone who has been to that area will need to quarantine in a hotel when they come into Queensland. And that's important because we can now say over the last two days, we have had six new cases. It has been a long time in Queensland since we have really had those sorts of new case numbers.

So this is an increasingly risky time for Queensland. We need to get through the next week and that is really important so everyone, if you're unwell, it doesn't matter where you are in Queensland, if you are in South Queensland, definitely, but anywhere else. Unwell with any symptoms, please come forward immediately, get tested and isolate yourself until you get that result or if you do get that result and it is negative, then until your symptoms have resolved. This is not the time for anyone to be spreading any symptoms through the community. Because that makes it much harder for us to work out what is going on. So firstly, if you're unwell, isolate yourself and get tested.

Secondly, you have to maintain social distancing. I know it is so alien to all of us. We're humans, we want to be in close contact with people but this is the time that you must maintain that 1.5 metre distance and wash your hands regularly. That is really important. Then the third thing is, don't go to places where we know there are cases. So don't go overseas unless you really have to, don't go to Victoria, anywhere in Victoria and really reconsider if you need to go anywhere in New South Wales and particularly, don't go to Greater Sydney. We know there are more cases there and that puts yourself at risk and your family at risk. And you will be required to quarantine in a hotel if you come back. All of those things are really important.

Then, there are other things you can do to help yourself and your family in the community. If you are going to clubs, pubs, restaurants, make sure you leave your contact details. That is really important. I would really like if every single Australian downloaded the COVIDSafe app. That would be a fantastic result but to date we haven't. One quarter of us have. I have because I think that is the best way I can protect my family. I know I am the highest risk in our family. I'm out and about far more than my family is so I want to know the second I have been in contact with somebody who has COVID-19 so I can go home to my family and say, now you have to genuinely stay away from me. So please, I do request every single Queensland to download the COVIDSafe app. That is a really important tool that would just help us. We have now contact traced all of the people who have been in close contact with that first confirmed case who went to Melbourne. Unfortunately, the second confirmed case has not wanted to let us know where she has been so therefore that is why I am spreading that message that if anyone is unwell, to please get tested because I don't know where that second case has been. So that is really, really important. So, everyone, stay home, get tested if you're sick, maintain distancing and don't go to places where we know there are high numbers of cases. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

I was going to make a couple of comments around the three ladies who went interstate and are now back in Queensland and obviously subject to investigations by the police. We have identified all of those women now, all three of those women who went into Victoria and returned into Queensland. That was with the assistance of our Victorian counterparts and obviously a sterling job by the Queensland Police service to get to the bottom of some of the issues that are taking place. I am very disappointed with them at this stage, they went to extraordinary lengths to be deceitful and deceptive, and quite frankly criminal in their behaviour and it has put the community at risk. From the beginning of this, we have issued well over 1100 infringement notices and 40 people have made false declarations at our borders will stop. I have asked the ones issued recently, in particular to these women, the infringement notices to be renewed and for them to actually go before the court with notice to appear, to appear. This is purposefully so to send a message that we will not tolerate this behaviour at our borders and put all the people at risk. We will review our infringement notices in the future make sure that we are taking a tough stance on this but I do want to make another couple of comments and the Premier has touched on this. Our framework and our rapid response is extraordinarily solid. We have planned for this, we have exercised this and obviously in the last few days it has come to fruition and it has worked extraordinarily well. So I think everyone in Queensland can have high confidence that what we're doing to protect our state is extraordinarily... it's working extraordinarily and exceptionally well and I will leave the answers till after the Deputy Commissioner. Thank you for that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHESKI:

Good morning. Can I just start with the overarching system that we have in place with our borders, and just remind everyone that borders are the first line of defence for all of us. As the Chief Health Officer said, the next layer of defence is our social distancing, and the reason why that is so important is because the borders are not 100 per cent guaranteed. And as we've seen we've seen, we've had some people coming to the state who have tested COVID positive. Social distancing is very important and our third layer of defence with our rapid response is currently in play. As the State Disaster Coordinator, I can assure you it is operating at a very high level and I have great confidence what it is doing. I will come back to the investigation shortly, but I just want to point out that our border controls are working effectively. Our review of what has happened has demonstrated that the border and the border controls that we have in place are doing what they are designed to do. What we have seen in these instances are deliberate acts of deception. The way our borders operate cannot prevent that. It is incredibly important that everyone that comes into Queensland, is accurate in terms of their declaration. In this instance, it is not a matter of identity, there is no false identity. It is about not declaring where people have been. Our ability to say where have you been for the entire period that you have been out of the state, we are unable to do that. We rely on the community telling us. The purpose for that is to stop the spread of this deadly disease. This disease kills people, this disease makes people very sick, this disease costs people's livelihoods and this disease has really impacted on our community. Everyone, irrespective of their background has to do the right thing and absolutely has to declare when they have been. If they do that, they will be able to come back into Queensland and there may be conditions with that with quarantine, but that is very important. If I can go back to the investigation as the Commissioner has alluded to. We have high confidence that there were only three people who have gone to Victoria, have gone to this party, and then returned. We have identified

those, and we have identified everyone who was at the party in Victoria with our Victorian colleagues, and have high confidence around that. So our focus now is working with those young women to identify everywhere that they have been since they have come back into Queensland. As you have heard, what has been cooperative, one has not been cooperative. We will continue to use the powers we have at our disposal, including considering further offences by anyone that doesn't co-operate with the investigation, to try and get that information out so that we can absolutely focus on identifying where any risk may be in our community and take the appropriate action. We are still working with the third person that was identified late yesterday. Just to clarify, there are three young women who have gone to Victoria who have been exposed to COVID, two have tested positive for COVID. All three are in quarantine. The third has not tested positive for COVID, and the other person that is connected who has tested positive for COVID is a relative of one of the first to make. With respect to what is happening, as the Commissioner alluded to, these persons will be put before the court, investigation has not yet concluded, those charges will be formalised today and further announcements will be made about them later. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] does that mean that police will be seeking jail term [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

Matters of guilt and innocence in terms of imprisonment are matters of courts, they will do what they have to do. Just bear in mind too, that two of these people are currently ill with COVID. Which is another astounding thing, putting themselves and others at risk, not getting treatment is quite amazing really, and not in a good way. We will have to work through and see when the appropriate time as we can take that action. It may be that we will have to wait some time before it goes before the courts.

REPORTER:

What is the charge [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

We will announce that later in the day. We are yet to finalise the investigation in relation to that specifically.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

So, there are 95,000 people who have come through the air borders since the 10 July. 95,000 people have come through. The vast majority have done exactly what we expect of them. Fill out a border declaration pass and say where you have been. Nominate whether you have been in a hot spot. We have got significant numbers of people have gone into quarantine because they have come back from hotspots. These people in our investigation, we will allege to the court, had deliberately deceived us. Knowingly and deliberately deceived us about where they have been. Now, there is no system in the world, unless we track people, that can tell us

exactly where this people have been. Because they transited through Sydney, the only information available for the police was the fact that they had boarded a flight in Sydney.

REPORTER:

Did you say before that you can't ask where they've been?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

No, we do ask where they have been but they deliberately, in this instance, what we will say is that they have deliberately falsely said when they have been.

REPORTER:

Is there any way that manifest [inaudible] to see where they've been?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

Those are the sorts of things we can do when we are investigating. There are privacy issues around this in terms of the information we can access in a proactive manner. Airlines have been very cooperative in terms of how we deal with these things. Generally speaking, we can only access certain information when are doing an investigation for a crime that has occurred.

REPORTER:

What do you know about this party that they went to in Melbourne? [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

We understand there were somewhere between 20 and 30 people. Victoria Police took action against all of them. I don't have the exact details, I understand there was a disturbance which related to why the police had been called to it. They took the appropriate action and through that action by police in Victoria that we know who exactly was at the party, and we can rule out the fact there were no other Queenslanders.

REPORTER:

Can you explain why they're wanted by Victorian Police?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

I'm not saying they are wanted by Victorian police.

REPORTER:

There were reports this morning that they were.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

No, the, we're still working with the Victorian authorities. We're also interested into their activities and what they were doing and certainly any other activity since they have been in Queensland and before that. There are other investigation is ongoing at the moment that I won't comment on.

REPORTER:

Are you saying that the false information that they [inaudible] their names on [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

Absolutely, the real issue for us is one of where have you been on have you been in a hot spot? They were able to come through, we have been able to retrieve their border declaration passes. The problem we've got is where they have said they have been.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

We're working through that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

I have no information around what Victoria Police are doing about that at the moment.

REPORTER:

Just to clarify, are those 970-odd [inaudible] metro south, do you say none of them have tested positive, or is it too early?

DR YOUNG:

It's too early to have got all of those results back. But all of the results we have got back none have been positive, other than the three I've told you about which weren't related to those Melbourne clusters.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] so quickly, I mean it hasn't been 24 hours?

DR YOUNG:

We usually get results in about 24 hours so we'll be getting those results back today.

REPORTER:

And for the wait time for test results, we understand some people have been told it was 24 hours but now it's increased to 72 hours, is that true?

DR YOUNG:

No, most... it depends who is doing the test. So we do have some interstate companies, private pathology firms that test in Queensland, and those take longer. QML and SMP, who are the two Queensland based private pathology firms, they also have labs elsewhere in the country but they've got labs here in Brisbane, usually 24 hours unless of course from a regional area, and Pathology Queensland, so the Queensland Health pathology unit, is usually 24 hours.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] outbreaks around New South Wales and declaring more hotspots, do you think it's inevitable that the borders will have to close again?

DR YOUNG:

No, I don't think it is inevitable. I think that New South Wales is getting on top of those clusters but until they do, it is sensible – and we have seen that today – it is sensible to close the border to anyone who has been in Greater Sydney.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] stage one, stage two restrictions [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Not at this stage, it will depend on the results we get over the next 24-48 hours whether anything like that is required. But it is really important that people adhere to the restrictions that are in place today, which means that there are limits on people who can go into venues, one person per four square metres other than for very small venues where it is capped at 50 with one per two. That is a really important restrictions, and to give genuine contact details. So people giving false details are slowing down the speed of which they will get contacted which puts their family at risk.

REPORTER:

How are you going to prepare for a second wave?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, that is what we're doing today. We are making sure that we won't get a second wave. That is our job to be prepared and to stop the second wave.

REPORTER:

On aged care homes. You brought in restrictions in Metro South, but I'm told that [inaudible] nursing home are now saying they're reducing visitor hours to two hours each day in other parts of the state. Is that appropriate or are you concerned they might be locking down too early?

DR YOUNG:

I think that our aged care facilities in Queensland have done a fantastic job from day one. They have looked out for their residents very carefully and if they think it is important that they reduce visiting then I will totally support them. I think it is very important that in Metro South and West Moreton, where I've asked the aged care facilities to reduce visitors, to enhance screening of their staff and to minimise movement of staff between facilities, that they do that. The rest of the state, I think it is important that the aged care facilities look at their own risk and make decisions based.

REPORTER:

One of the restaurants the girls visited said they only heard about this via text message from their friend, and they hadn't heard [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we first found out only the day before yesterday that we had that one positive case and immediately worked with the school and then all yesterday worked with a whole range of venues. So now, all venues have been contacted and anyone who has gone to those venues that we believe is a close contact, we have contacted them. I am very about the second individual who has not been

cooperative and has not shared with us where she has been. So we have not been able to contact those venues and we will continue to work with that individual and hopefully get information. But that is why I am saying that people should be very cautious if they have got any symptoms at all, doesn't matter where they live, in Brisbane, or indeed anywhere in the state, this is the time to get yourself tested.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] try and ascertain that second person's [inaudible]. If she won't be cooperative [inaudible] can you do things like check the tracking on her phone or something like that? What can you actually do apart from asking?

DR YOUNG:

Police are doing all of that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] because I think people would be really interested to know how [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Yes. And there'll be a lot more of asking going on. Obviously as I mentioned before there are powers under the Health Act so we have our officers appointed as emergency officers-general under the Health Act and they are able to exercise their powers there. So she's been compelled to provide information and chooses not to, there are offences that are committed. So there are potentially more charges that can come if persons refuse to cooperate. We don't generally reveal all of their methodologies – let's just say that we're not leaving any stone unturned to try and work out where these people have been.

REPORTER:

Did you say she has been compelled, or...?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

We're in the process of going through that. So we've already interviewed once, and we'll be going back again, but at this stage we're not getting the information that we need.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Look, I won't go into too much detail other than that they indicated they'd only been in Sydney.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, can I quickly just ask you again – Victoria today, 723 new cases. It seems like their contact tracing has not been that effective at the moment. Is that a situation [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We've been providing support to them with contact tracing because they didn't have sufficient to manage that. I believe we do have sufficient to manage a similar scenario if it were to happen in Queensland due to the work we've done across whole-of-government that the Premier led. I've been

given enormous resources so that we do have staff from agencies that we've been training up to be contact tracers. So I don't have any concerns that we wouldn't have enough contact tracers.

REPORTER:

Does it seem inevitable that there will be more cases coming out of [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, it's not inevitable.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well we've had three cases and it's too early to say we'll walk away scot-free. We need to have a lot more testing over the next 48 hours before we can say that we've got it in hand. It's reassuring that we've not got anymore positives but it's far, far too early to be complacent. The message is that anyone who lives in South Brisbane, in Logan, Springfield, anywhere in that area any symptom at all please just come forward and get tested. Because the quicker we can find people the quicker we can then stop that train of transmission and that's what this is all about. We don't want that second, third, fourth generation number of cases. We want to really clamp on this as quickly as we can.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] the school and Logan Hospital yesterday so all those people going in, you would have been happy to see that?

DR YOUNG:

Oh very, very happy. Yes. The more people who come forward and get tested the better. That is our best strategy to really get a feel of where we've got cases and we're so lucky in Queensland that we've got a superb pathology sector both in the public and private so we can test. We can test up to 10,000 people per day and then we've got more capacity we could turn on if we needed to.

REPORTER:

Can I ask you about borders please?

PREMIER:

Yes, I just want to follow up on what Lane was saying there too. Can I just say too...can I thank the enormous community response to coming out and getting tested yesterday. That was heartening to see that Queenslanders acted so quickly but our message is very clear. If you are sick, any symptoms, get tested. We have clinics available across Queensland. It is very, very important and everyone has a responsibility to do the right thing to protect Queenslanders.

REPORTER:

With the declaration of the hotspot of the Greater Sydney area, our tourism operators are saying that they're already seeing mass cancellations for the coming few months, what do you say to them?

PREMIER:

This is about protecting Queenslanders. It's about protecting our families, it's about protecting the health. And we need to get on top of it. We need to make sure that Queensland is safe and then we can continue to go about our daily jobs and duties in whichever that means. That is really important to me and I'm sorry if there are some cancellations but Queenslanders can support Queenslanders during this time. I'm not making any apologies for making sure that Greater Sydney is now a COVID hotspot.

REPORTER:

Premier would you consider making hotel quarantine free again?

PREMIER:

No.

REPORTER:

Premier do you think an honesty system is good enough for our borders and have you been [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes Jack most people are doing the right thing. You heard the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner. It is unbelievable to think that Queenslanders are putting other Queenslanders at risk. That's what really annoys me here and there is a social responsibility here for everyone to do the right thing. And they have put the health of Queenslanders and their families at risk. That's what they've done.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well you tell me what other system we're suppose to have.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Well the majority of people are doing the right thing Jack. These are people who deliberately went about doing the wrong thing. Deliberately.

REPORTER:

Given your anger and ...



PREMIER:

Yeah I am angry.

REPORTER:

...bringing in laws to jail people and you hear Dr Young and the police say one of them is still not cooperating surely you'd want the book thrown at them and jail when they get to court?

PREMIER:

I'm not the court system but what they have done is put the health, wellbeing and lives of Queenslanders at risk. I think that speaks volumes.

REPORTER:

Can I ask a question to the Commissioner?

PREMIER:

Yes then we might wrap up.

REPORTER:

What else can you tell us about this party? Was it birthday party? A house party? How many people were there? What part of Victoria was it in?

COMMISSIONER:

I don't know what type of party it was but certainly the girls from Queensland were well involved in that party and as a result they and all the others received an infringement noticed when they were in Victoria. Can I go to the point about the people doing the wrong thing? Unfortunately we're all going to get a one per cent of people doing the wrong thing. That's what we respond to all the time. So we have got a group of people whether it's in every day life or at our borders that are going to do the wrong thing. We think the processes and the systems are excellent but if you go, like they did, and spend an awful amount of time planning how they were going to deceive and be deceitful that's doing the wrong thing. And unfortunately...sorry can I just touch on this? Because that is that small percentage that always makes it extraordinarily difficult for everyone to keep us safe, you name it. And these people are still not being cooperative. Our police will obviously take some action in relation to that but you've got to have confidence that the system that we have in place is exceptional. It is exceptional compared to what we see in other parts of the country.

REPORTER:

You touched on it there Commissioner [inaudible]...spur of the moment?

COMMISSIONER:

They planned I think when...and look I'm only...I believe that obviously there were plans going into Victoria as to what they were going to do down there as well as obviously how they were going to make their way back. Unfortunately, we often deal with a group of people

that has no regard for others and we find ourselves in an extraordinarily difficult situation. We talk about, and we have from the very beginning, those that have a reckless disregard for others and this is what we're talking about.

REPORTER:

Commissioner there's obviously quite a lot of anger in those communities, we've been seeing down in Logan and Springfield. What would you say to the community who might turn this into a race issue or something like that? There's a lot of anger there.

COMMISSIONER:

Well that's incredibly wrong to be angry about that. This has got nothing to do with race. I spoke about 40 people who've done the wrong thing in terms of their declaration and they come from all walks of life. So this is simply a group of people who are doing the wrong thing. And sadly, they've put us in a very difficult situation. But brilliantly, the system works and we do have a very, very good system that has rapidly responded to this. Can I ask, as has been asked by Jeanette and the Premier, that people continue to be tested over the next few days because that will hold us in the best stead.

REPORTER:

There is no potential of [inaudible] against people lying is there?

COMMISSIONER:

I wish there was in society Lane sometimes but you...and thankfully, we do have a...people generally do the right thing but unfortunately such is life that we're always going to find that small percentage that does the wrong thing and this is what's happened.

REPORTER:

Commissioner it sounded like you've changed direction on the fine early? Maybe use the review going forward – so they've been fined and it's going court? Or did....

COMMISSIONER:

So one has been issued with an infringement notice so what I am saying is that I believe that from here on in that we will be looking at infringement notices particularly around declarations, false declaration and seeing whether they should be automatically going to court with a Notice to Appear. I want to send a very strong message about this. This is not just you come in and make a false declaration, you get a fine. You need to be held to account. Ultimately it is up to the discretion of the officer involved but certainly I will be asking my senior police to look at each of those infringement notices to see whether they should be a little bit stronger than that. Thankyou.

PREMIER:

No, that's it. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Do you think it warrants jail?



COMMISSIONER:

I think that the courts will hopefully look at this very, very seriously as is the public.

PREMIER:

Ok thank you.

COMMISSIONER:

Thank you everyone.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Forum: Press conference

Speakers: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young, Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll and Deputy Commissioner Steve Gollschewski

Date: 31 July 2020

Duration: 31 minutes 19 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

In overnight news, I can confirm that we've only had one new case. This is a 27-year-old male in quarantine from Bellbird Park. I want to stress to everyone that he is believed to have been a close contact of people who went to the Korean restaurant in Sunnybank on the 23rd July. So it's very important that if anyone else was at that Korean restaurant, the Mat Thong San Korean restaurant in Sunnybank, if you have any concern, if you are feeling the slightest bit unwell you must go and get tested. We still have 11 active cases, and I can confirm the last 24 hours we have had 9076 tests that have been conducted. Can I say from the outset, I want to thank everyone who has gone and had a test. Now there will be delays, there will be queues and I ask people to be patient, but this is a wonderful response, this is exactly the response that we need for people to come and get tested.

We're not out of the woods yet, we're going to keep a very close eye on what's happening, especially over the next few days. But the response has been terrific and I want to thank all Queenslanders for doing that. But of course, this is a very serious situation and of course over the weekend I want Queenslanders to really think about social distancing, really, really think about social distancing, keep up the good hand hygiene. It is absolutely important.

The other thing that I want to mention today too is of course from 1am tomorrow, Greater Sydney a COVID hotspot. There will be delays at the border. So think about your travel plans and think about where you need to go and think about the timing of those journeys. I'm not making any apologies for those delays because our police have a very important job to do, and I want to thank everybody for the work that they are doing on our borders to keep Queenslanders safe. There is nothing more important during this time. So, the Police Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner will address this issue.

So I'm very, very comfortable with the rapid response that has been taking place in relation to these girls returning from Melbourne via Sydney, and the rapid response that has been put in place by Health and the police is outstanding. I want to pay a big public thank you to everybody who has been involved in that effort. But it is also very important if you are sick to stay at home and get tested. Any symptoms whatsoever, we want people to do the right thing. Like I said yesterday, if you are going into a crowded venue, you need to make sure that you social distance or you leave if you do not think that social distancing is being adhered to.

Now is not the time for complacency. Complacency is our enemy. So do the right thing and if you see someone not doing the right thing call them out. I do. So make sure that you do the right thing and we'll get through this together. I will hand over to the Deputy Premier and the Chief Health Officer will give a more detailed explanation about that man from Bellbird Park.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The new case reported today brings Queensland's total number of COVID-19 cases to 1083. 11 of them remain active, five are in hospital. We broke records yesterday in Queensland for our level of testing: 9076 tests, 7627 Queenslanders. Of those tests, 726 were in the West Moreton HHS, 2498 in Metro South HHS - the largest focus of this effort - and 1428 in the Metro North HHS. The new case today is a 27-year-old male from Bellbird Park. He's related to a person who went to the Mat Thong San restaurant at Sunnybank on 23rd of July, and that is considered the most likely source of the infection.

It underlines just how critical our contact tracing efforts are, and more than 1500 contacts have now been traced related to these three cases. It also underlines how important it is for restaurants to keep a record of their patrons. Those records are incredibly important, they allow us to contact people quickly who may have been exposed to the disease. It also underlines how important it is that everybody, everybody checks that list of places where we think people who have been infected have been. That list is a source for information so that you can know if you have potentially been exposed and if you see that list, if you know of anyone who is likely to have been to those locations, please alert them to it.

Last night, Queensland Health issued a list of restricted suburbs and I understand that it has been circulating on social media. I'd like to emphasise that that list of restricted suburbs, the only new restrictions that apply to those suburbs are to aged care facilities in those locations. There are no other additional new restrictions there. As I said, record levels of testing, but in some cases that has overwhelmed our fever clinics. We want to thank everybody who has got tested. We want to thank them for their patience, apologise for delays where they have occurred, testing is incredibly important. I want to assure Queenslanders that I have asked Queensland Health and the affected HHS's to do everything they can to ramp up testing capacity, to improve queue management, to ensure that people get tested as quickly and as conveniently as possible. On the Queensland Health website there is a page where you can put your post-code in and get a list of locations where you can be tested. Our fever clinics are not the only options. You can also be tested at a range of other health care providers including our fantastic private pathology services, QML and SNP and I'd like to thank them for their work assisting us to do those tests.

And finally today is the day that Queenslanders who are currently in Sydney and who would like to return without going into quarantine, must return. So it is a message to anyone currently in Sydney who is a Queensland resident, and who like to return without having to go into hotel quarantine, today is the day that you must come home.

DR YOUNG:

So, one new case overnight, a 27-year-old gentleman who lives in Bellbird Park, who at this stage, I believe, contracted the infection from a relative. We still need to confirm those details

and we will be working through all the contact tracing related to him. But at this stage we know that one of his relatives who may be the source of the infection works at the Bolton Clarke aged care facility in Pinjarra Hills, a very good facility. They already had very good COVID-safe plans and they have put them into action this morning just in case we do find out that that person who works there is the source of infection. That's in case any relatives who have their relatives in that aged care facility hear of anything. That is a very important, very rapid response and that aged care facility has done a very, very good job already this morning.

So, it is really important that all of us consider the three things that we each need to do to keep ourselves, our families and our communities safe. If we have any symptoms, no matter how mild, to stay home and get immediately tested. Secondly, to at all times maintain social distancing and wash your hands and thirdly, to reconsider the need to travel to either New South Wales, Victoria or overseas. If we all do those things we can keep ourselves, our family, our communities safe as we possibly can.

Now I do ask that people keep an eye out on our website in case we do need to announce more places, now that we're contact tracing this new case who lives in Bellbird Park. We do believe, as I said, that he obtained it... contracted the infection from one of his relatives who attended that restaurant in Sunnybank on the 23rd of July, which was one of those venues that the first case who went down to Melbourne attended. We are fairly comfortable that that's probably where he's got it, but we will do contact tracing for him now as to who he might have come into contact with. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

Thank you and good morning everyone. From the very outset I would like to thank all of the community for your patience and really high level of compliance generally. This has been truly incredible and held us in good stead. Queensland Health, as you know, has put enormous resources into establishing these fever clinics and we have been providing additional support in terms of traffic management as well as policing and obviously walking some of those lines that were there for an extended period yesterday. So can I please ask that people are very, very patient. Today we will continue with that traffic management. We will have additional police liaison officers and police actually walking up and down those lines. We haven't had an incident there yesterday and that really is because people were getting impatient so please be patient. I know it will take a while but as I said, and will continually say, this has held us in good stead as a result.

The investigation into the three women that have returned from Victoria into Queensland has obviously resulted in charges. They will appear in the Brisbane Magistrates Court on the 28th of September, and this obviously is for providing false information and fraud charges. I want to make some comments about what's taking place in the community. We have seen community members making comments about certain cultural groups and ethnicities. This is not productive at all. People doing the wrong thing come from all walks of life, backgrounds and community groups. So it is important, especially in these times, that community groups actually come together rather than fracture.

Police have so far issued 16 infringement notices to various people who have not complied with the Queensland border direction. For example, yesterday an individual in Central Queensland provided false information and was issued with an infringement notice and there was a further incident overnight at the Gold Coast border where a person was issued with a \$4000 fine for attempting to enter Queensland unlawfully. So police will continue to obviously issue these infringement notices for people who wilfully and recklessly do the wrong thing and today we have issued 2169 infringement notices. The Deputy Commissioner will comment on the sheer number of people that we have processed with other departments – both at the road borders as well as the air borders. It has been a substantial and absolutely sterling effort by all of those involved.

We, as you know, have a new border system coming in from 1:00am tomorrow as Greater Sydney is declared a hotspot. So whenever a new direction does come in there will be delays. So the message from all of us, as always, is please be patient, plan your trip and planning your trip actually means giving yourself a little bit more time. Ultimately, it is the safety of the community involved here and we will be taking our time, if need be, to process everyone that comes through our borders. As always, and I think we always end on this message, social distancing, good hygiene is paramount and if you are unwell, please stay home and get tested. Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Good morning. May I start with the investigation that the Commissioner just spoke about and just assure everyone that we have concluded our inquiries in relation to the breaches of our border by these three individuals. We have high confidence that we have been able to identify all the information that we need to be able to trace where these young women have gone, and you've heard this morning from Health about some of the things that are in place in terms of how we are trying to deal with that. So, we are very comfortable with that. Obviously the charges for very serious offences are now a matter for a court to be considering when they appear in September.

Can I talk about the three areas that the Commissioner just alluded to? Starting with our borders, the borders have been a very effective mechanism for us and it's important to remember that since we started the border controls back in March that over half a million vehicles at our road borders have now been checked. 11,312 people have been put into quarantine for coming from overseas. And since we've gone to hotel quarantine in Queensland for people domestically coming from hotspots around the country, we have put 1507 people into hotel quarantine to try to keep our community safe. You would hear from the Chief Health Officer when she has talked about new infections over the past few weeks that the predominant number of those people have been in quarantine. So clearly our quarantine and borders have been working in keeping our community safe. The numbers are quite staggering. We have already hit 100,000 since 10 July being checked at our domestic airports. We are expecting around 8000 people coming into Brisbane today from interstate – obviously a number of Queenslanders wanting to come back home before the restrictions come into effect tomorrow morning. We are in a position to be able to process them very effectively.

So our borders are working and I've listened with interest to some of the suggestions that are coming out there around what we should consider in terms of how we do our borders. We are very interested for the ideas that come out of our community. Can I give everyone an assurance that we have thought about all of these extensively. We have tested the things that we need to do and within the current legal and other operational restraints we have we are operating on the best system. But we continually review it and we continually adjust it. And certainly those people that are coming out of the Greater Sydney hotspot, that have a border declaration pass will be getting push notifications telling them that there is changed circumstances and they need to update their passes. That is just an example of some of the things we have done to try to streamline the system. So high confidence there, we are able to meet that and as you have heard from the Commissioner we are still detecting people trying to get through the system falsely. And we will continue to do that. With respect to our rapid response, of course that is the third tier of our protection so if people do get through that system we are able to rapidly identify them and then test and quarantine those people in the community that need to do that. And that is unfolding as we see that.

And I want to finish off with the second part which I have referred to a number of times, which is the social distancing – the second tier of protection that we have in this state. That is the really important one that I'd really like our community to think about because that is the one that our community can do the most about. So how we obey the social distancing, the personal hygiene that we do, staying home when we are sick. And as we are coming into a weekend please remember that if you are thinking about going out and about in the community that we will be out there again checking licensed premises, making sure people are abiding by the distances that they need to – the 1.5 metres and the other rules that we have in place – and making sure that everyone is doing the right thing because this is really about making sure that if anyone gets into our community with COVID that we can limit its spread. Thank you very much.

REPORTER:

Do you have any numbers on how [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

What I can you, but we don't keep specific numbers for each areas but we do keep numbers of people who have been turned around. So since the 10th of July at our road borders 2593 people have been turned around. So they would be from hotspots both in Victoria and Sydney. And at our domestic ones – if I can just find the right place – we have turned around 49 passengers. So refused entry for 49 passengers.

REPORTER:

I guess what I mean is with the 1:00am set date on Saturday, all the people trying to get back into Queensland [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Yes, that's what I was talking about when I said the 8000 passengers expected today. That is a lot more than we would normally see so this the people coming back from Sydney. So we are ready for that.

REPORTER:

Just on the borders, are on roads being manned 24/7 and are you hearing any reports of people slipping through country roads?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

We've had various reports from time to time, but we've got systems in place for all of those. They're not staffed 24/7 necessarily way out in the remote parts of Queensland. There's very small backtracks, but what we have got is patrols in those areas and police doing intercepts of people that are in that area to check whether they've come across or not.

REPORTER:

You praised the rapid response but yesterday you had people waiting for seven hours, collapsing, even when they got to the front of the queue and put their name down they never actually go the test. Are you happy with that, is that acceptable, and are you doing anything today, rolling out more [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, as I said, it's not good enough. We do want to test people fast and conveniently and that's why there were urgent meetings yesterday between Queensland Health, those health services and other healthcare providers, and those discussions continue today. I expect they'll be better today. There is improved queue management processes in place. But I'll just emphasise that there are multiple options for people to go and get tested, and perhaps before they leave they should search that website and see what those options are. If they arrive at a site where there is a long queue, we'll be providing them with information about alternative options. We want people to get tested. We appreciate them getting tested, we thank them for their patience and I apologise for those who've had to wait.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Not routinely. But I might ask the Chief Health Officer to explain why.

DR YOUNG:

Not everyone who gets a COVID-19 infection ever gets a temperature. So it can be quite a late symptom. So it's far, far more important that people take note of any other symptoms, rather than waiting for a fever or a temperature. So we know that's not the best way of checking people. It is being done in some places, often though as a tool to remind people of the importance of saying whether or not they've got any symptoms. Because whether or not you've got a temperature doesn't mean you do or don't have COVID-19.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] what's your advice for those people [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

People should always be alert to where they've been, and anyone who's been to Greater Sydney should look at the Department of Health website for New South Wales and they've listed where they've got all their current outbreaks. So if they've been to any of those places, it would be very sensible – as those two people did the other day – to quarantine themselves at home.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I believe that Queenslanders should proceed about their normal business as they have been. If they've got any symptoms, as always they should stay home, they shouldn't be out and about and they should get themselves tested. But if they're absolutely well and they're not in quarantine because they're a known contact of a case, then they should do what they normally do.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So we know this is very, very early information and it could rapidly change, but I'm just being extra cautious and this aged care facility is also being extra cautious. So the 27 year old gentleman who tested positive overnight lives in Bellbird Park. He has been in contact with his partner and his partner's wife and potentially, I believe, contracted COVID-19 from one of those two individuals. Now we don't have results on either of those individuals but we do know that both of them attended that restaurant on the 23rd of July at the time that the first case who came back from Melbourne attended. So it's highly likely that one or both of those two individuals are positive for COVID-19, because we don't have other outbreaks going on in our community today. They're related to these two people and the third person who went with them down to Melbourne. Now, one of those two individuals that I believe probably has COVID-19 works at that aged care facility. So just until I find out which individual has had the infection and which individual worked there, I've asked that the aged care facility take a very, very, very cautious response, which they've immediately done. And so they've just asked all their residents to stay in their individual bedrooms. All their residents have their own bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms, so I've asked that they just do that. So they've all been given breakfast in their bedrooms this morning, for instance. So this being ultra cautious. It doesn't mean, even, that one of these two wasn't the one that didn't have the infection and works there. We just have to work it all through. They're a very good aged care facility.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is that the third person who's in quarantine that hasn't returned a positive result and you feel they might [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, no. Sorry, this is so confusing for everyone. I do apologise. I just assure everyone we're being very cautious here. So we have a gentleman who tested positive overnight. He's our fourth case in this cluster. He has been in contact with two relatives who were at the restaurant in Sunnybank on the 23rd of July when our first case in the cluster attended.

REPORTER:

Can you paint a picture about that moment in the restaurant, what you know about? Because everyone worries about going to one of these restaurants. Were they there at the same time? Were they sitting next to each other, with the Victorians?

DR YOUNG:

So I've only just got any of this information this morning. I'm amazed that we've got this much information at this stage. We're untangling all that. But we know that the two women who attended that restaurant were deemed to be close contacts and went into quarantine. They did absolutely the right thing. But we only knew about them after their relative had already been tested because he was unwell. So there are a lot of things going on simultaneously here. But the whole system has worked very, very well. The gentleman already got himself tested before even knowing he was potentially a contact of a contact.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] yesterday that one of the individuals started cooperating and telling you where they've been. Why isn't there an update in the list of places that that individual might have gone in in the proceeding eight days?

DR YOUNG:

Because they mainly stayed at home.

REPORTER:

Do you trust that?

DR YOUNG:

I do. We have excellent police who have done a really good job all through that. We know police are very good at interviewing people who don't necessarily want to tell the truth. And we've checked that with supporting information from the other travel companion. So we're pretty comfortable. But having said that, we don't know where this virus could be. So here we've got gentleman in Bellbird Park who's suddenly popped up positive. We think we've tracked back the chain to where he's probably got it from. But that's think and belief. I don't know that. So at any point in Queensland today, we could have cases pop up. So that's why the most important message is, if you're sick stay home and get tested. We don't have a lot of other disease out there. I think last week we had 10 cases of influenza in the entire state of Queensland. We don't have a lot of respiratory disease, so if you've got respiratory symptoms today in Queensland there is a reasonable chance that those respiratory symptoms are due to COVID rather than due to something else. So the most important message is don't yourself try and work out where you might have got your respiratory symptoms from. Leave that to the contact tracers – you just go and get yourself tested. And look, I do apologise for

all of those queues that people are having to wait in. We're doing our absolute best today to try and manage that better to give a better response for people to be able to get tested, but I'm very, very grateful to the people who have come forward and managed those queues and got themselves tested.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] mainly stay at home, but that suggests that she also went somewhere else. Will there be updates on where she's been?

DR YOUNG:

Of course. If we ever find anywhere that someone's been who is a confirmed case and they've been there during the period they were infectious, we will always update that. So today, the most important job for our contact tracers is to go and talk to the man who has just tested positive and find out exactly where he's been and we'll be providing that information to everyone.

REPORTER:

Premier, can [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yep. Then I have to go, I've got a meeting.

REPORTER:

Your reaction to the [inaudible] backdoor handling of the pandemic [inaudible] Government's support order?

PREMIER:

I'm only focused on one thing at the moment and that's keeping Queenslanders safe.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Victoria. There's talk about a national security response as well [inaudible]. Any update [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

I don't know anything about that. No.

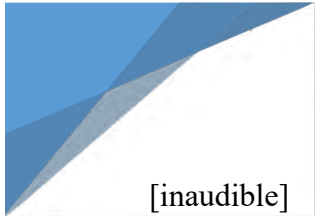
REPORTER:

Are we sending more support?

PREMIER:

We will always be talking to Victoria and where we can send support. Where we do have the resources we are happy to look at that, and as you've seen we have actually sent nurses down there.

REPORTER:



[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Everyone is absolutely focused on dealing with this COVID response, whether that's the health response or the economic response. My Cabinet is 100 per cent united in this. There's nothing more important.

REPORTER:

Are you worried Clive Palmer said today that he's announcing he'll run candidates now [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Let me just say one thing about Mr Palmer. Mr Palmer was taking us to court to fully open up all the borders. I think that says a lot about Mr Palmer.

REPORTER:

He is also facing charges. Is that appropriate the he is [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well, that's a matter for the courts.

REPORTER:

Can you please clarify? So at the border, aside from IDs and border passes, are police requesting anything else [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Look, people do their Border Declaration Passes and in that they provide certain information. So what our officers do when they intercept people is verify that information through whatever means. And as we know, people have various types of identification. Now, depending on where they say they have come from, our officers will then interrogate that further. So the example with the person that came over the border early this morning at Coolangatta, it is the story didn't add up and when police dug into it further they found out that she actually came out of Fairfield in Sydney and had put a false declaration in. So that person was fined \$4000 and turned around and sent back to Sydney for their trouble. So that's the type of process that we go to. Our officers are very good, as the Chief Health Officer said, at questioning people and working out what is going on. So that's what they are paid to do.

REPORTER:

And do you think the processes [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Look, we get very good cooperation out of the airlines. You have got to remember the massive numbers that we are talking about here. So 8000 passengers here today. The vast majority are doing the right thing. They all have a Border Declaration Pass. We have had

significant numbers of people that just make simple errors and we work through that with them. I have the figures on that, not with me, but we'd certainly that, and we work that through with them. So we know what the error rates are, and there are very, very few who are deliberately falsifying records. And we have been managing to capture them as well.

REPORTER:

Just one more question for the Deputy Commissioner. Are you investigating any link between the three women and a crime syndicate? And there has been a suggestion that they [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Yeah, I've read some of the reporting. A lot of that is complete news to me. I have not heard any of that in any of the briefings I've been getting. We have got ongoing investigations, but really they are in our normal policing space. I'm not going to comment on them any further. Thank you.

[ENDS]

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