

09 August 2020

COVID-19 Update

This week Victoria has reentered a strict lockdown period to inhibit the spread of COVID-19. Efforts to manage and control emerging chains of community transmission are also underway in South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales, with authorities indicating that the majority of these cases can all be linked to people who have recently traveled to Victoria. While for now the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Tasmania and the ACT have no registered cases they remain on high alert. All Australians are being asked to curb travel, social activity and to avoid large gatherings.

National Cabinet met on Friday to discuss the situation. The Prime Minister reinforced that all Governments are working together to address the health and economic impacts of the pandemic and are doing what they can to support Victoria. There was a focus on controls in place across the country and on preparedness in regards to quarantine processes and aged care facilities in particular.

The A/g Chief Medical Officer was confident that Victorian lockdown measures would be effective noting it could take a couple of weeks before we see results. He noted that across the country young people (between 15 and 30) have the highest rates of transmission and that innovative health messaging is needed to target this age group. He also provided an update on global efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine indicating that across the world many clinical trials are underway.

Latest information in regards to Commonwealth initiatives to support businesses and individuals under financial stress can be found here: <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus>. It is also important to note that a range of measures to specifically support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses during the pandemic have also been introduced and information about these can be found here: <https://www.niaa.gov.au/covid-19/service-providers-and-businesses>.

During this time we don't want people getting ill from preventable conditions. So please encourage and support those in your networks to keep attending clinics and health services for routine health checks and to seek medical assistance when they need it.

Lastly, the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) is in the process of developing a training course on Hepatitis C (HCV) specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners and is seeking expressions of interest for course content reviewers and facilitators. If you are interested in helping with this initiative please respond to the following: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SDL5LCD> by Friday 17 August 2020. More information about ASHM, the course and the help needed is included in the document attached.

Thanks again for the work that you do and please stay safe.

The NATSIHWA Team

