

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Minister Mick de Brenni, Kim Richards MP, Don Brown MP, Joan Pease MP, and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

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E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Today in Queensland we're reporting two new cases of COVID-19. They're both linked to each other and, we believe, linked to the existing cluster around the Youth Detention slash Correctional Training Academy. But that will be investigated today, and we hope to have more information. They are a male and a female aged between 30 and 39 years of age. We understand one of them works at an aged care facility. That aged care facility has done everything that we have asked of them, and the Chief Health Officer will have very, very positive praise for the actions of the aged care facility in responding there. That means that we're now close to two weeks since that first case was reported at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and we continue to see small numbers of cases, generally amongst those who've had contact with other confirmed cases. And that's really promising. It suggests that our efforts, that our rapid response, is working. We now have 30 active cases, bringing our total here in Queensland to 1128. We did 14,273 tests in the last 24-hour testing period, which, again, is really promising and can give us confidence that we are finding our cases if they are out there.

You'll all recall that we announced some time ago a program to pop up fever clinics in tourist locations to ensure that if there were any cases of COVID-19 coming into the state via our tourism industry that we would identify them. We've also been working with the University of Queensland on a sewage surveillance program. Some results from that program have recently suggested that there may have been some... a case of COVID-19 in the Airlie Beach area, and with the upmost caution the Mackay HHS is standing up a fever clinic in Airlie Beach today. We'd like to emphasise that this is not considered a high risk. We are taking this action with the upmost of caution and as part of our regular program of popping up fever clinics in tourist locations. We simply want to see an increase in the level of testing in that area so that we can assure ourselves that there isn't cases of community transmission there that we don't know about, so that we can keep our tourism industry there safe and opening.

Today, we're here at the Redlands Hospital for a really important announcement. This hospital is an incredible part of the local community. They do a really, really great job. They became even more important after the Newman Government closed down the Wynnum Hospital, leaving Redlands to service a much greater area. I was here not long ago to announce a very significant investment in a new multi-storey carpark, and I said at that time

that the carpark was an important enabler for us to do future expansion here at the hospital. As you can see, you couldn't take carparks away for building, for new construction because the existing carparks are already so over-utilised. And so, now that we have the carpark underway, we can announce that the State Government will invest \$32 million dollars into a stage one redevelopment of the Redlands Hospital. That comes on top of a \$30 million dollar commitment from the Federal Government, which of course we welcome, meaning that we will be able to invest \$62 million dollars in a major expansion here – stage one of a much bigger expansion down the track. It will allow us to build a new 32-bed ward as well as a new six-bed intensive care unit and refurbish other parts of the hospital. It comes on top of recent enhancements to the emergency department and the birthing suites. Construction will commence in 2021 and we hope to have it completed in 2022. In the process we will create 179 jobs in construction.

We're also announcing today that we are providing \$6 million dollars of funding to the HHS to begin planning stage two so that people can see that we have a long-term plan to expand this hospital, invest in this hospital, because we understand how important it is to this local community. But also, because investing in new and better health facilities is a core part of our plan to unite and recover for jobs here in Queensland. We've said consistently that the first stage of our economic plan is managing COVID, but an element of our economic stimulus is also to continue to invest in those wonderful health services that have kept Queenslanders safe. I may just ask our local MPs to very briefly say something about this announcement, and then the Chief Health Officer is here to take any COVID-related questions. Mick?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Well what terrific news that is for the Redlands community. There has never been a more important time in living memory for us to be investing in better health services, and it's wonderful to see this significant investment here for Redlands families. Just a couple of weeks ago I had the privilege to visit with a new mother here, Anika, and her baby son, Nevea, and they sung the praises of the staff here and the maternity facilities. Now to have the opportunity to be able to talk about this expansion, delivering the six ICU beds, the further emergency department capacity that's been delivered here and going to be continued to be delivered, really builds confidence in our community; that they know that if they need to bring themselves or a loved one here to this hospital that they'll continue to get the very best, world's best care. Of course, the carpark is a significant issue for the staff here and visitors to the hospital as well, and so the overall masterplan for the hospital is delivering something for everybody. And as the Minister for Health said, quite importantly, this project will deliver 179 jobs for local tradies here in this community. It's all part of our plan to ensure the economic recovery of Queensland while we deliver important legacy infrastructure for Queenslanders, for people who call the Redlands home.

KIM RICHARDS:

Thank you. This is absolutely fantastic for our Redlands community. Much awaited. The news of the carpark recently expanding as the enabler for us to do further works here is just great news. The Palaszczuk Government continues to deliver for our Redlands community, particularly in the health services space. We know that the \$6 million dollars to look at the

greater expansion of the hospital will be welcome by our entire community. So we're excited here to be delivering more services for our Redlands community.

DON BROWN:

Thank you, DP, for coming out yet again. Obviously, a couple of weeks ago we just had the announcement of the seven-level carpark here, so it's fantastic to build on that even further with a 32-bed ward and also a six-bed ICU, something that the local community has been calling out for years here in the Redlands. And it's only a Labor Palaszczuk Government that's delivering on these health services. But also, another \$6 million dollars to go into the planning and design work for the next phase of Redlands Hospital, making sure that we keep up with growth, keeping up with the elder population that's happening down here in the Redlands. I know it's something that I've been fighting for for my local community for many years and I'm glad that the Premier and the DP have been listening to our calls and we're delivering it here today.

JOAN PEASE:

Thank you very much. It's great to be here today at this fabulous announcement. And what this means for Baysiders is a close to home tertiary hospital delivering the best healthcare to Baysiders. We have a fabulous Wynnum-Manly community health centre that again was built by the Labor Palaszczuk Government, so we have a strong commitment to improving all of our health services, to be providing the best possible healthcare for all Queenslanders. So I'm really excited about this. What it means is Baysiders will be able to attend a hospital close to home and get the world-class healthcare that they need. So this is great news as we unite and recover from the pandemic.

DR YOUNG:

It is absolutely fantastic news to see the expansion of this hospital. Before I became Chief Health Officer, I worked in Metro South and I saw this hospital grow from a very small hospital and to see what's happening today is fantastic news. And that is the best way to grow a hospital – you start small and you just grow. And the final part of the puzzle, if I can put it like that, is the intensive care unit. Not only for those six beds that are there, but the fact that it elevates the care through the entire hospital. It increases the amount of teaching that is done, the amount of training that is done. So this is really, really good news for the people who live here. Care is always best if it can be provided close to home. We know that for so many reasons.

Now, overnight in Queensland we had two new cases of COVID-19 confirmed, both of them in people who are known contacts of cases and both contacts of each other. So that is good news. We're starting to see, you know, two weeks into this cluster, that we've got control. It is too early to say we've solved it, we've still got a long, long way to go but we can see that we're getting a couple of cases each day. So that is really good news, and that is due to the work done by the community with those very strict restrictions that we've put back in place – people adhered to them – and it is also a fantastic result from all of the healthcare staff involved. We have seen what West Moreton has stood up and done and the clusters that they're managing out there, and their very, very rapid response last night when they got told of one case in a staff worker in the Laidley aged care facility. They immediately activated

their plan. Now fortunately that staff worker did not work while symptomatic, they were very, very appropriate. Got themselves tested and so forth. But we know that you're actually most infectious before you have symptoms. But because of the process that was put in place getting aged care facilities to manage their facilities, to manage the risk, to use PPE, the risk for that facility is very low. But we will now, of course, be testing all of the residents, all of the staff and some of the staff have had to go into quarantine, but that is our plan and that will all be managed.

Now you also heard that because of a test of the sewerage done in Mackay and Airlie Beach two weeks ago, which came up potentially positive, it is very early days for sewerage testing. We're not quite sure what it means, but the hospital and health service, very prepared, and they are – and they have indeed already – stood up a fever clinic there just to increase the surveillance. We know that Airlie Beach is a tourist destination, so a lot of people travel there from within Queensland and indeed from other states where the borders aren't closed. So it is important that we just are a little bit more alert wherever we've got tourists coming because we know the risk is a little bit higher. So they've been very proactive, they've stood up their clinic and they'll do some enhanced testing of the people who live there. We don't know what this means, because you might remember that we've had a number of ships off the coast there with positive cases, so we're just not sure where this might have come from. But it doesn't really matter, the response is the important thing, so that is in place.

Then as we continue with these increased cases in the south east, it is really important that people continue to follow all of those firm restrictions. So we really can't have gatherings of more than 10 people unless there is a COVID Safe Plan in place, that means in people's homes, because we are, through this cluster, seeing that wherever you've got a case in a home, rapidly the other people in that home are getting infected. We know that is the case, particularly early on in an outbreak, we know the home is the riskiest place. So that is why those gatherings limited to 10 in people's homes are so important. We must protect our vulnerable. The work that was done to protect the Laidley aged care facility means that the risk for those residents are so much less. So, I know it is really difficult and the second that we can remove these restrictions, we'll do that, but at this point in time, this is not the time to be visiting in real life, face to face, your relatives in aged care. Use other means, so telephones, Skype, virtual means. That is most important, we must keep our most vulnerable people, and they are the people who live in our aged care facilities, as safe as we possible can. Then we also know that our prisoners are amongst the most vulnerable people. So we're working very, very closely with Queensland Corrective Services to work through what is happening in our large number of our prisoners where we've got some cases in the staff. So that is all being sorted through as we speak. Thank you. Happy to take questions.

REPORTER:

With Father's Day on Sunday, what is your advice to people going to visit their dad?

DR YOUNG:

If you don't live in that normal household, delay your hugs for Father's Day until this is all over because that is the best gift you can give your father. You don't want to give your father COVID-19. So, definitely join in groups of up to 10, but be really careful with the more

vulnerable people. So I suppose I was thinking of my father who is well into his 80s when I was saying that, if your father is 30, then of course, there is a difference there. But, for anyone who is in that vulnerable cohort in that older group, or has significant chronic disease, immunocompromised, now is not the time to give them a hug. But see them, talk to them, visit them, human interaction is absolutely critical, of course.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] new cases, they were close contact of previous cases, does that mean they were friends with them or have they visited a place that the other infectious people had visited?

DR YOUNG:

We're working through that at the moment to exactly find out where that contact occurred, but we're pretty confident at this stage that they've had contact with a confirmed case.

REPORTER:

At Laidley, you said that the person there, the staff member, didn't work while symptomatic, were they working before that? So potentially they worked in their most infectious period?

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

Right, so what happens now? Does every resident there have their own room? Are people going to be moved out of there, what [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So that is a very, very good facility. They had their COVID Safe Plan, they put it into place so they're just working that through at the moment. They've got a little bit of spare capacity so they believe that they can make sure that each resident has got their own bathroom, so that is all being sorted through at the moment. So the staff worker worked in a staff area, they didn't have contact directly with any of the residents, so the staff members that they had contact with will need to go into quarantine. But they were all wearing PPE, which was the requirement that we put in place a few weeks ago, and they were adhering to that.

REPORTER:

And how many residents will have to get tested?

DR YOUNG:

All the residents in the facility.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, it is a reasonably small facility as you'd expect for a community that size.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So we've now got 30 active cases today, and the vast majority of those are linked to that cluster to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and to the training academy. We've seen some definite links between those two clusters, but we haven't worked through all of the people, we think they're probably all completely linked, but we just have to finalise all of those details.

REPORTER:

On the AFL, can you explain how having 30,000 people at the Gabba is going to be able to adhere to social distancing rules? At the moment you've got a [inaudible] 30,000 people you're not going to be able to have that?

DR YOUNG:

So, today you can have 20,000 people at the Gabba, and that has been done multiple times and very, very safely. So the plan is, depending where we are in Queensland on the 24th of October, we'll make a decision whether it is safe to have that 30,000. We've got to remember all of these plans were being developed when we had no community cases, no community transmission in Queensland and things looked pretty good going forward. Now that we've had this particular cluster related, I think, due to those three young women who went to Melbourne, we've had to rework that, so of course we're working that through with the AFL. So I am very confident that the 24th of October is still a good solid six weeks away, and we've started to see some control over this current cluster. We'll keep on testing, and we're testing large numbers of Queenslanders which is excellent, so we make sure that we're not missing any chains of transmission out there, then we should be able to have that 30,000. But that 30,000 is not an absolute given today. The 20,000 is, unless of course we had a complete disaster in terms of case numbers. I am pretty confident that we should be able to manage that 20,000, we've managed it many, many times and I am very hopeful that we'll be able to go up to that 30,000.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Of course it is. I am confident though, I genuinely think that we will be able to manage this. I mean we have got really good systems in place. I was thrilled last night to see the response to that one staff member who had worked at that Laidley aged care facility, it just happened. Bang, bang, bang. They knew exactly what they were doing. This is a small facility in a rural area and they knew exactly what to do and it was handled beautifully. And that is what we're doing every single case in Queensland, we get on top of immediately and we respond and those are the sorts of things that will keep us all safe and mean that we can very, very safely hold a large event like that on the 24th of October.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] travel to the Northern Territory, I believe, quarantine there and then [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Anyone who had been in the Northern Territory and has not been outside of the Northern Territory in the previous 14 days can come to Queensland. They don't have any cases of COVID, it is a long, long time since they have had. The Northern Territory is very, very safe. Now it is up to the Northern Territory whether they want to provide a quarantine hub for Victorians, that is their decision, but once someone has been in the Northern Territory for 14 days, then they are perfectly safe to come to Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, because you've done your 14 days quarantine, so you're perfectly safe. As I say though, that is then of course up to the Northern Territory whether they're prepared to be a quarantine hub for people from other states who want to go there and then transit through to Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Victorian residents who can't come to Queensland and go into [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

They can if they have a reason to come to Queensland. So every single day I am signing off exemptions, and I now have a large team who is assisting me with that because we are getting so many requests now. If they have a reason to come to Queensland, so they have a relative who needs their help, or they've got jobs here, because you've got to remember there is always a large net migration out of southern states to Queensland normally. People come to Queensland for jobs, and those things are still happening. So as long as they have a reason to come to Queensland, then yes, of course. They quarantine for 14 days and then they can go about their lives.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is coming to the footy a reason though? Wanting to come to the footy, that's not a reason?

DR YOUNG:

No, that is not a reason.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, they can just travel. Anyone can travel into Queensland today, unless you've been overseas and of course you then need to go into quarantine in wherever you first arrive in the county, and for Queensland, anyone who has been in Victoria or New South Wales or ACT, unless they live in the border zone, the declared border zone in New South Wales, will need to quarantine when they come into Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] can you justify to them why are they allowed to play for the grand final [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Because those people are supporting the people who are putting this event on. This event is an important event and it needs to be put on under a COVID Safe Plan, which has happened, so the people who are involve in putting that event on, whether they be journalists – I know I've approved quite a number of journalists, TV anchor people, camera people etcetera – to come in, and all of them are going into hotel quarantine. Now the AFL has stood up a hotel to do that and they are managing that, so that is not an impost on us. So we currently have 24 hotels in Queensland that Health and Police are managing together, this is an additional hotel on top of that number. So it is not stopping other people coming into Queensland who have those reasons that they can travel into Queensland for.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] do you think the border, is there a chance the Queensland border may open to New South Wales before the AFL Grand Final?

DR YOUNG:

At this point in time, the trigger to open the border to New South Wales is when they have had two incubation periods of no community transmission. Yesterday they had one case, so they are getting there. now if they were to have 28 days of no community transmission – that is the current definition to open the border – then that would occur.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] what do you say to people who say that Queensland has a double when it comes to border restrictions?

DR YOUNG:

Nope, it is the one standard, it is done by a team that I manage and the standard is that we keep Queenslanders safe, that we know that the highest risk of brining the virus into the state is from areas that have higher amounts of community transmission. We do, at the moment, have our own cluster and there is a lot of work happening to... that is working through at the moment that we need to make sure we keep our people who live around those clusters safe. But we know that bringing people from areas of the country or overseas that have significant amounts of community transmission are a risk and that is why we have a quarantine process in place.

REPORTER:

We heard today from the Together Union that 50,000 workers are getting a pay rise, 1.75 per cent from today. How does that gel with the pay freeze and all of that before?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, the pay freeze applied to all enterprise bargaining agreements negotiated by the Government. I understand the Industrial Relations Commission has adjusted the award rate, which is the minimum rate that all employers have to pay and that that would be applied.

REPORTER:

What sort of workers are they?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

They're a range of public sector workers, many of them frontline – so people like child safety workers, that kind of thing.

REPORTER:

And how much is the cost?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I don't have that level of detail, Patrick. I'm sure we can get it for you.

REPORTER:

Isn't it a bit misleading? The Premier has announced a pay freeze. It became a deferral to save no money. It was supposed to start April 2, it then started July 1. Now we're in September and there's another pay rise happening.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Adjustments to the minimum wage apply to all employers, and I'm sure you would expect the State Government to comply with the law as we would expect every other business. But the component that we had control over is the enterprise bargaining agreements that we negotiate with unions and our employees and they have all been frozen for this financial year.

REPORTER:

The union said it negotiated this when it was talking to me about the legislation, so how long have you known about this?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well the Commission only just made its decision, as I understand. And so there was no forewarning that this decision... what this decision would be. It affects the minimum rates of pay that all employers... so all employers have awards that underpin their enterprise bargaining agreements, and in this case the Commission has determined to adjust the award rates of pay.

REPORTER:

Can you guarantee that there'll be no more surprises?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I don't know of any other decisions that are pending but as you'd expect the State Government will comply with the law.

REPORTER:

What do we know about the situation at Borallon, more riots again this week?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I understand there's been some unrest overnight at Borallon, but the information I have this morning from the Minister for prisons, Minister Ryan, is that things are back to a steady state at both that prison and others – Arthur Gorrie – that there is not ongoing unrest today. Look obviously it's not great to have our prisoners in lockdown, but it's what we need to do to keep them safe to ensure we don't have an outbreak in the prison.

REPORTER:

In terms of hotspots, how interested are you in coming to an agreement on a national level?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, those matters will be discussed by the state and territory leaders with the Commonwealth at National Cabinet and I'm not going to pre-empt that. All I would say, though, is that it is incredibly important that states have the ability to manage outbreaks in their own states based on the circumstances of those outbreaks. It's been...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, I don't have the proposal, it's Cabinet-in-confidence, but...

REPORTER:

Surely [inaudible] some sort of national...

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Hang on. I want to answer your last question, Clare, before Allison interrupted me. It's really important that our Chief Health Officer continues to have the powers that she needs to manage outbreaks here based on the information, the intelligence here, as well as what is happening elsewhere and we'll look to pursue those rights.

REPORTER:

Will the Government be releasing a cost-benefit... [inaudible] of the grand final before it goes into caretaker mode?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look I understand those negotiations are commercial-in-confidence, but what I understand is also that the modelled economic contribution is much greater than the contribution that we've made to the cost of putting the final on. And I think all Queenslanders want to make sure that we do a really good job of this. We're custodians of a very, very special day for Victorians, and we want to make sure that we do a really good job, that we take care of it for them. We want to see them able to watch their great game, their great final, on their TV screens live from the Gabba, and I'm sure that we will, as we always do, put on a really fantastic event.

REPORTER:

Sorry, just on that modelling. Can you just explain that? Given it looks like the border may be closed, I mean I'm not an economist but usually you need people to come from elsewhere to spend the money. If it's Queenslanders spending Queensland money in Queensland, how are we making money off the AFL grand final if it's two Melbourne teams?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

First of all, that may be an economic contribution that people weren't otherwise making. But people will still be able to travel to Queensland from the other states and territories that are open. And the AFL is very popular in places like South Australia and Tasmania, and so I understand that that modelling has been done, that it says that this festival of footy we'll get to experience here, not just in Brisbane but right around the state, will make a very valuable contribution to the state.

REPORTER:

So how's it any difference – we've got three AFL games back to back over one weekend, [inaudible] 20,000 that are happening now, [inaudible] 16-20,000 in there. How is it any different now?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

People will travel from around the state as well as around the country to go to what will be an historic event. You know, more than a century since this game has only ever been played in Melbourne to see it played in Brisbane at the Gabba I think is great for the state and I think it's pretty hard to challenge that something like that won't make an economic contribution. Just think about the promotion that it will bring Queensland and our Good to Go campaign nationally. That in and of itself has an enormous value. You just can't buy that kind of promotion for our state – to have the Gabba, to have Queensland beamed live into TV sets right around the country, right around the world, you know, it's something Queenslanders should be very proud of.

REPORTER:

Gladys Berejiklian has said that Queensland's been unwilling to budge on any border issue and that the south east is more of a threat to northern New South Wales than the other way around, what do you say to that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yesterday New South Wales reported 17 new cases of COVID-19. We reported yesterday two, today two. It would be much harder for us to manage outbreaks, clusters like the one we are if we had cases coming in from other states. And so it's really important, those border restrictions are really important. Those border restrictions are really important. I work... I've worked really closely with the New South Wales Health Minister. I know our Chief Health Officer works very closely with the New South Wales Chief Health Officer to manage those kinds of border issues. I've said to you before that those that make it into the public discussion are a very, very small proportion of those that get dealt with and managed behind the scenes. I think it's also important to remember that New South Wales has its borders to Victoria closed at the moment. So New South Wales knows how challenging it can be to manage these border issues. In fact, we assisted them when they put those border restrictions in place, but I'd underline that it is Queensland and the other states and territories with their borders closed whose economies have fared the best. And that's what was borne out in the data that was released yesterday. And so, not only is it benefitting Queenslanders to have Queensland kept safe for Queenslanders, but it's benefitting the whole national economy.

REPORTER:

Is Coralee running at the state election?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, as I understand it, Coralee is Labor's preselected and nominated candidate for the state election. I've heard no announcements otherwise.

REPORTER:

Do you think that it's a cheap play that the Labor Party is using these border closures as a campaign strategy?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Not at all. We have, throughout this entire year now – more than I think 210 days – we have managed this pandemic with only one thing in mind and that is keeping Queenslanders safe so that we can keep Queenslanders at work and that's what we continue to do.

REPORTER:

So it will be an election strategy going forward? Playing up your response to the pandemic?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Our decisions, whether they relate to local declarations of hotspots or how we manage the health response locally or restricting people coming from other states with larger number of case numbers, our decisions are made by our Chief Health Officer each and every day and in the case of borders, at the end of every month with only one thing in mind and that is how to keep Queenslanders safe.

REPORTER:

Can I ask a question to Minister de Brenni?

REPORTER:

Oh, I have one too.

REPORTER:

Me too.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Go for it.

REPORTER:

There's been some calls from Tenants Queensland to extend that eviction period by three months. What do you think?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Well, we would all remember that National Cabinet made the decision to extend a moratorium on evictions for residential tenancies and I think that was an incredibly important decision to take at that time. We were all asked to stay in our homes and not move around. The measures that the Palaszczuk Government put in place through a consultative process with representatives of both tenants and property owners have been very, very effective. They have contributed significantly to the health outcomes that we've seen in Queensland that has kept people at work. We have been constantly reviewing those arrangements throughout the course of the pandemic. At the start we set up a COVID-19 housing security sub-committee with representatives from right across the property sector – Tenants Queensland and the REIQ – and they have been reviewing the effectiveness of those measures and they continue to do that. Currently some of those measures are due to expire on the 29th of September. That's some time away. We'll continue to work with the housing security sub-committee to consider whether or not any of those measures need to be extended and of course, we'll continue to take on board the decisions of the National Cabinet and primarily the advice of the Chief Health Officer when it comes to keeping people in their homes safe.

REPORTER:

Do you need to legislate that next week if that's the last week of Parliament or can you do with a regulation or a piece of paperwork?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

No. A lot of these matters are allowed to be done by regulation and of course, there are measures that we can take into account throughout the caretaker period as well. Look, what we've learnt from this pandemic is that it's a rapidly changing environment and our responsibility is to respond with agility with the purpose of keeping Queenslanders safe so we can keep them in work. We've done that in respect of a whole range of sectors whether it's construction, whether it's residential tenancies or commercial tenancies, and so we'll just have to keep doing that until the pandemic concludes.

REPORTER:

The 29th isn't that far away, when do you expect [inaudible]?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Look, we'll make decisions on that over the next couple of weeks and we'll have more to say on that. There are some elements of the reforms that we've put in place which I think are incredibly positive reforms where there is real consensus around. Like the reforms that we put in place to protect Queenslanders experiencing domestic and family violence. Part of the conversation that we're having with tenants' representatives and property representatives is whether or not we should make those enduring provisions. I very much support that, but the introduction of those measures at the start of the pandemic, we were able to introduce them with just a few days' notice. And so going forward we'll have to continue to respond. As you heard from the Chief Health Officer earlier, we'll make decisions on a regular basis based on the prevailing circumstances of the day. And so we'll just keep doing that. We'll watch it closely but ultimately the decisions that we take will be based around keeping Queenslanders safe.

REPORTER:

Residents have expressed outrage in the paper this morning about overdevelopment and houses being crammed into the Redlands area. Particularly two homes on Broadwater Terrace which have just centimetres between them. Are you concerned that the development code isn't up to scratch? Is Council doing enough to make sure Redlands isn't overdeveloped?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Fair enough. I'm not familiar with those particular developments and of course, everybody around the globe is looking for more and more affordable places to live. Queensland is the number one place in the country where people want to come and live at the moment and we're still seeing people wanting to come here for jobs, for education, for the great health services that are provided here and so some of those small lot housing developments make those home affordable. It is a responsibility of councils to make sure that they get their planning schemes right. And of course, I'm interested always to ensure that properties are built with a level of sustainability and liveability for those Queenslanders that call them home. So I'm happy to have a look into any of the particular circumstances but I know that the housing industry is keen to ensure that we continue to see new homes being built. In fact, an interesting statistic that I've picked up this morning is that there has been a 15 per cent increase in the number of Queensland Home Warranty Schemes written this year compared to this time in 2019. And what that signifies is that people will continue to invest in their homes, new homes and renovations. That's great news for those tradies working in the construction industry in Queensland.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

All good? Thank you.

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Thank you everybody.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Minister Mick de Brenni, Kim Richards MP, Don Brown MP, Joan Pease MP, and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 3 September 2020

Duration: 39 minutes 28 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Today in Queensland we're reporting two new cases of COVID-19. They're both linked to each other and, we believe, linked to the existing cluster around the Youth Detention slash Correctional Training Academy. But that will be investigated today, and we hope to have more information. They are a male and a female aged between 30 and 39 years of age. We understand one of them works at an aged care facility. That aged care facility has done everything that we have asked of them, and the Chief Health Officer will have very, very positive praise for the actions of the aged care facility in responding there. That means that we're now close to two weeks since that first case was reported at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and we continue to see small numbers of cases, generally amongst those who've had contact with other confirmed cases. And that's really promising. It suggests that our efforts, that our rapid response, is working. We now have 30 active cases, bringing our total here in Queensland to 1128. We did 14,273 tests in the last 24-hour testing period, which, again, is really promising and can give us confidence that we are finding our cases if they are out there.

You'll all recall that we announced some time ago a program to pop up fever clinics in tourist locations to ensure that if there were any cases of COVID-19 coming into the state via our tourism industry that we would identify them. We've also been working with the University of Queensland on a sewage surveillance program. Some results from that program have recently suggested that there may have been some... a case of COVID-19 in the Airlie Beach area, and with the upmost caution the Mackay HHS is standing up a fever clinic in Airlie Beach today. We'd like to emphasise that this is not considered a high risk. We are taking this action with the upmost of caution and as part of our regular program of popping up fever clinics in tourist locations. We simply want to see an increase in the level of testing in that area so that we can assure ourselves that there isn't cases of community transmission there that we don't know about, so that we can keep our tourism industry there safe and opening.

Today, we're here at the Redlands Hospital for a really important announcement. This hospital is an incredible part of the local community. They do a really, really great job. They became even more important after the Newman Government closed down the Wynnum Hospital, leaving Redlands to service a much greater area. I was here not long ago to announce a very significant investment in a new multi-storey carpark, and I said at that time

that the carpark was an important enabler for us to do future expansion here at the hospital. As you can see, you couldn't take carparks away for building, for new construction because the existing carparks are already so over-utilised. And so, now that we have the carpark underway, we can announce that the State Government will invest \$32 million dollars into a stage one redevelopment of the Redlands Hospital. That comes on top of a \$30 million dollar commitment from the Federal Government, which of course we welcome, meaning that we will be able to invest \$62 million dollars in a major expansion here – stage one of a much bigger expansion down the track. It will allow us to build a new 32-bed ward as well as a new six-bed intensive care unit and refurbish other parts of the hospital. It comes on top of recent enhancements to the emergency department and the birthing suites. Construction will commence in 2021 and we hope to have it completed in 2022. In the process we will create 179 jobs in construction.

We're also announcing today that we are providing \$6 million dollars of funding to the HHS to begin planning stage two so that people can see that we have a long-term plan to expand this hospital, invest in this hospital, because we understand how important it is to this local community. But also, because investing in new and better health facilities is a core part of our plan to unite and recover for jobs here in Queensland. We've said consistently that the first stage of our economic plan is managing COVID, but an element of our economic stimulus is also to continue to invest in those wonderful health services that have kept Queenslanders safe. I may just ask our local MPs to very briefly say something about this announcement, and then the Chief Health Officer is here to take any COVID-related questions. Mick?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Well what terrific news that is for the Redlands community. There has never been a more important time in living memory for us to be investing in better health services, and it's wonderful to see this significant investment here for Redlands families. Just a couple of weeks ago I had the privilege to visit with a new mother here, Anika, and her baby son, Nevea, and they sung the praises of the staff here and the maternity facilities. Now to have the opportunity to be able to talk about this expansion, delivering the six ICU beds, the further emergency department capacity that's been delivered here and going to be continued to be delivered, really builds confidence in our community; that they know that if they need to bring themselves or a loved one here to this hospital that they'll continue to get the very best, world's best care. Of course, the carpark is a significant issue for the staff here and visitors to the hospital as well, and so the overall masterplan for the hospital is delivering something for everybody. And as the Minister for Health said, quite importantly, this project will deliver 179 jobs for local tradies here in this community. It's all part of our plan to ensure the economic recovery of Queensland while we deliver important legacy infrastructure for Queenslanders, for people who call the Redlands home.

KIM RICHARDS:

Thank you. This is absolutely fantastic for our Redlands community. Much awaited. The news of the carpark recently expanding as the enabler for us to do further works here is just great news. The Palaszczuk Government continues to deliver for our Redlands community, particularly in the health services space. We know that the \$6 million dollars to look at the

greater expansion of the hospital will be welcome by our entire community. So we're excited here to be delivering more services for our Redlands community.

DON BROWN:

Thank you, DP, for coming out yet again. Obviously, a couple of weeks ago we just had the announcement of the seven-level carpark here, so it's fantastic to build on that even further with a 32-bed ward and also a six-bed ICU, something that the local community has been calling out for years here in the Redlands. And it's only a Labor Palaszczuk Government that's delivering on these health services. But also, another \$6 million dollars to go into the planning and design work for the next phase of Redlands Hospital, making sure that we keep up with growth, keeping up with the elder population that's happening down here in the Redlands. I know it's something that I've been fighting for for my local community for many years and I'm glad that the Premier and the DP have been listening to our calls and we're delivering it here today.

JOAN PEASE:

Thank you very much. It's great to be here today at this fabulous announcement. And what this means for Baysiders is a close to home tertiary hospital delivering the best healthcare to Baysiders. We have a fabulous Wynnum-Manly community health centre that again was built by the Labor Palaszczuk Government, so we have a strong commitment to improving all of our health services, to be providing the best possible healthcare for all Queenslanders. So I'm really excited about this. What it means is Baysiders will be able to attend a hospital close to home and get the world-class healthcare that they need. So this is great news as we unite and recover from the pandemic.

DR YOUNG:

It is absolutely fantastic news to see the expansion of this hospital. Before I became Chief Health Officer, I worked in Metro South and I saw this hospital grow from a very small hospital and to see what's happening today is fantastic news. And that is the best way to grow a hospital – you start small and you just grow. And the final part of the puzzle, if I can put it like that, is the intensive care unit. Not only for those six beds that are there, but the fact that it elevates the care through the entire hospital. It increases the amount of teaching that is done, the amount of training that is done. So this is really, really good news for the people who live here. Care is always best if it can be provided close to home. We know that for so many reasons.

Now, overnight in Queensland we had two new cases of COVID-19 confirmed, both of them in people who are known contacts of cases and both contacts of each other. So that is good news. We're starting to see, you know, two weeks into this cluster, that we've got control. It is too early to say we've solved it, we've still got a long, long way to go but we can see that we're getting a couple of cases each day. So that is really good news, and that is due to the work done by the community with those very strict restrictions that we've put back in place – people adhered to them – and it is also a fantastic result from all of the healthcare staff involved. We have seen what West Moreton has stood up and done and the clusters that they're managing out there, and their very, very rapid response last night when they got told of one case in a staff worker in the Laidley aged care facility. They immediately activated

their plan. Now fortunately that staff worker did not work while symptomatic, they were very, very appropriate. Got themselves tested and so forth. But we know that you're actually most infectious before you have symptoms. But because of the process that was put in place getting aged care facilities to manage their facilities, to manage the risk, to use PPE, the risk for that facility is very low. But we will now, of course, be testing all of the residents, all of the staff and some of the staff have had to go into quarantine, but that is our plan and that will all be managed.

Now you also heard that because of a test of the sewerage done in Mackay and Airlie Beach two weeks ago, which came up potentially positive, it is very early days for sewerage testing. We're not quite sure what it means, but the hospital and health service, very prepared, and they are – and they have indeed already – stood up a fever clinic there just to increase the surveillance. We know that Airlie Beach is a tourist destination, so a lot of people travel there from within Queensland and indeed from other states where the borders aren't closed. So it is important that we just are a little bit more alert wherever we've got tourists coming because we know the risk is a little bit higher. So they've been very proactive, they've stood up their clinic and they'll do some enhanced testing of the people who live there. We don't know what this means, because you might remember that we've had a number of ships off the coast there with positive cases, so we're just not sure where this might have come from. But it doesn't really matter, the response is the important thing, so that is in place.

Then as we continue with these increased cases in the south east, it is really important that people continue to follow all of those firm restrictions. So we really can't have gatherings of more than 10 people unless there is a COVID Safe Plan in place, that means in people's homes, because we are, through this cluster, seeing that wherever you've got a case in a home, rapidly the other people in that home are getting infected. We know that is the case, particularly early on in an outbreak, we know the home is the riskiest place. So that is why those gatherings limited to 10 in people's homes are so important. We must protect our vulnerable. The work that was done to protect the Laidley aged care facility means that the risk for those residents are so much less. So, I know it is really difficult and the second that we can remove these restrictions, we'll do that, but at this point in time, this is not the time to be visiting in real life, face to face, your relatives in aged care. Use other means, so telephones, Skype, virtual means. That is most important, we must keep our most vulnerable people, and they are the people who live in our aged care facilities, as safe as we possible can. Then we also know that our prisoners are amongst the most vulnerable people. So we're working very, very closely with Queensland Corrective Services to work through what is happening in our large number of our prisoners where we've got some cases in the staff. So that is all being sorted through as we speak. Thank you. Happy to take questions.

REPORTER:

With Father's Day on Sunday, what is your advice to people going to visit their dad?

DR YOUNG:

If you don't live in that normal household, delay your hugs for Father's Day until this is all over because that is the best gift you can give your father. You don't want to give your father COVID-19. So, definitely join in groups of up to 10, but be really careful with the more

vulnerable people. So I suppose I was thinking of my father who is well into his 80s when I was saying that, if your father is 30, then of course, there is a difference there. But, for anyone who is in that vulnerable cohort in that older group, or has significant chronic disease, immunocompromised, now is not the time to give them a hug. But see them, talk to them, visit them, human interaction is absolutely critical, of course.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] new cases, they were close contact of previous cases, does that mean they were friends with them or have they visited a place that the other infectious people had visited?

DR YOUNG:

We're working through that at the moment to exactly find out where that contact occurred, but we're pretty confident at this stage that they've had contact with a confirmed case.

REPORTER:

At Laidley, you said that the person there, the staff member, didn't work while symptomatic, were they working before that? So potentially they worked in their most infectious period?

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

Right, so what happens now? Does every resident there have their own room? Are people going to be moved out of there, what [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So that is a very, very good facility. They had their COVID Safe Plan, they put it into place so they're just working that through at the moment. They've got a little bit of spare capacity so they believe that they can make sure that each resident has got their own bathroom, so that is all being sorted through at the moment. So the staff worker worked in a staff area, they didn't have contact directly with any of the residents, so the staff members that they had contact with will need to go into quarantine. But they were all wearing PPE, which was the requirement that we put in place a few weeks ago, and they were adhering to that.

REPORTER:

And how many residents will have to get tested?

DR YOUNG:

All the residents in the facility.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, it is a reasonably small facility as you'd expect for a community that size.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So we've now got 30 active cases today, and the vast majority of those are linked to that cluster to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and to the training academy. We've seen some definite links between those two clusters, but we haven't worked through all of the people, we think they're probably all completely linked, but we just have to finalise all of those details.

REPORTER:

On the AFL, can you explain how having 30,000 people at the Gabba is going to be able to adhere to social distancing rules? At the moment you've got a [inaudible] 30,000 people you're not going to be able to have that?

DR YOUNG:

So, today you can have 20,000 people at the Gabba, and that has been done multiple times and very, very safely. So the plan is, depending where we are in Queensland on the 24th of October, we'll make a decision whether it is safe to have that 30,000. We've got to remember all of these plans were being developed when we had no community cases, no community transmission in Queensland and things looked pretty good going forward. Now that we've had this particular cluster related, I think, due to those three young women who went to Melbourne, we've had to rework that, so of course we're working that through with the AFL. So I am very confident that the 24th of October is still a good solid six weeks away, and we've started to see some control over this current cluster. We'll keep on testing, and we're testing large numbers of Queenslanders which is excellent, so we make sure that we're not missing any chains of transmission out there, then we should be able to have that 30,000. But that 30,000 is not an absolute given today. The 20,000 is, unless of course we had a complete disaster in terms of case numbers. I am pretty confident that we should be able to manage that 20,000, we've managed it many, many times and I am very hopeful that we'll be able to go up to that 30,000.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Of course it is. I am confident though, I genuinely think that we will be able to manage this. I mean we have got really good systems in place. I was thrilled last night to see the response to that one staff member who had worked at that Laidley aged care facility, it just happened. Bang, bang, bang. They knew exactly what they were doing. This is a small facility in a rural area and they knew exactly what to do and it was handled beautifully. And that is what we're doing every single case in Queensland, we get on top of immediately and we respond and those are the sorts of things that will keep us all safe and mean that we can very, very safely hold a large event like that on the 24th of October.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] travel to the Northern Territory, I believe, quarantine there and then [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Anyone who had been in the Northern Territory and has not been outside of the Northern Territory in the previous 14 days can come to Queensland. They don't have any cases of COVID, it is a long, long time since they have had. The Northern Territory is very, very safe. Now it is up to the Northern Territory whether they want to provide a quarantine hub for Victorians, that is their decision, but once someone has been in the Northern Territory for 14 days, then they are perfectly safe to come to Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, because you've done your 14 days quarantine, so you're perfectly safe. As I say though, that is then of course up to the Northern Territory whether they're prepared to be a quarantine hub for people from other states who want to go there and then transit through to Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Victorian residents who can't come to Queensland and go into [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

They can if they have a reason to come to Queensland. So every single day I am signing off exemptions, and I now have a large team who is assisting me with that because we are getting so many requests now. If they have a reason to come to Queensland, so they have a relative who needs their help, or they've got jobs here, because you've got to remember there is always a large net migration out of southern states to Queensland normally. People come to Queensland for jobs, and those things are still happening. So as long as they have a reason to come to Queensland, then yes, of course. They quarantine for 14 days and then they can go about their lives.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is coming to the footy a reason though? Wanting to come to the footy, that's not a reason?

DR YOUNG:

No, that is not a reason.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, they can just travel. Anyone can travel into Queensland today, unless you've been overseas and of course you then need to go into quarantine in wherever you first arrive in the county, and for Queensland, anyone who has been in Victoria or New South Wales or ACT, unless they live in the border zone, the declared border zone in New South Wales, will need to quarantine when they come into Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] can you justify to them why are they allowed to play for the grand final [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Because those people are supporting the people who are putting this event on. This event is an important event and it needs to be put on under a COVID Safe Plan, which has happened, so the people who are involve in putting that event on, whether they be journalists – I know I've approved quite a number of journalists, TV anchor people, camera people etcetera – to come in, and all of them are going into hotel quarantine. Now the AFL has stood up a hotel to do that and they are managing that, so that is not an impost on us. So we currently have 24 hotels in Queensland that Health and Police are managing together, this is an additional hotel on top of that number. So it is not stopping other people coming into Queensland who have those reasons that they can travel into Queensland for.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] do you think the border, is there a chance the Queensland border may open to New South Wales before the AFL Grand Final?

DR YOUNG:

At this point in time, the trigger to open the border to New South Wales is when they have had two incubation periods of no community transmission. Yesterday they had one case, so they are getting there. now if they were to have 28 days of no community transmission – that is the current definition to open the border – then that would occur.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] what do you say to people who say that Queensland has a double when it comes to border restrictions?

DR YOUNG:

Nope, it is the one standard, it is done by a team that I manage and the standard is that we keep Queenslanders safe, that we know that the highest risk of brining the virus into the state is from areas that have higher amounts of community transmission. We do, at the moment, have our own cluster and there is a lot of work happening to... that is working through at the moment that we need to make sure we keep our people who live around those clusters safe. But we know that bringing people from areas of the country or overseas that have significant amounts of community transmission are a risk and that is why we have a quarantine process in place.

REPORTER:

We heard today from the Together Union that 50,000 workers are getting a pay rise, 1.75 per cent from today. How does that gel with the pay freeze and all of that before?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, the pay freeze applied to all enterprise bargaining agreements negotiated by the Government. I understand the Industrial Relations Commission has adjusted the award rate, which is the minimum rate that all employers have to pay and that that would be applied.

REPORTER:

What sort of workers are they?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

They're a range of public sector workers, many of them frontline – so people like child safety workers, that kind of thing.

REPORTER:

And how much is the cost?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I don't have that level of detail, Patrick. I'm sure we can get it for you.

REPORTER:

Isn't it a bit misleading? The Premier has announced a pay freeze. It became a deferral to save no money. It was supposed to start April 2, it then started July 1. Now we're in September and there's another pay rise happening.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Adjustments to the minimum wage apply to all employers, and I'm sure you would expect the State Government to comply with the law as we would expect every other business. But the component that we had control over is the enterprise bargaining agreements that we negotiate with unions and our employees and they have all been frozen for this financial year.

REPORTER:

The union said it negotiated this when it was talking to me about the legislation, so how long have you known about this?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well the Commission only just made its decision, as I understand. And so there was no forewarning that this decision... what this decision would be. It affects the minimum rates of pay that all employers... so all employers have awards that underpin their enterprise bargaining agreements, and in this case the Commission has determined to adjust the award rates of pay.

REPORTER:

Can you guarantee that there'll be no more surprises?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I don't know of any other decisions that are pending but as you'd expect the State Government will comply with the law.

REPORTER:

What do we know about the situation at Borallon, more riots again this week?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I understand there's been some unrest overnight at Borallon, but the information I have this morning from the Minister for prisons, Minister Ryan, is that things are back to a steady state at both that prison and others – Arthur Gorrie – that there is not ongoing unrest today. Look obviously it's not great to have our prisoners in lockdown, but it's what we need to do to keep them safe to ensure we don't have an outbreak in the prison.

REPORTER:

In terms of hotspots, how interested are you in coming to an agreement on a national level?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, those matters will be discussed by the state and territory leaders with the Commonwealth at National Cabinet and I'm not going to pre-empt that. All I would say, though, is that it is incredibly important that states have the ability to manage outbreaks in their own states based on the circumstances of those outbreaks. It's been...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, I don't have the proposal, it's Cabinet-in-confidence, but...

REPORTER:

Surely [inaudible] some sort of national...

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Hang on. I want to answer your last question, Clare, before Allison interrupted me. It's really important that our Chief Health Officer continues to have the powers that she needs to manage outbreaks here based on the information, the intelligence here, as well as what is happening elsewhere and we'll look to pursue those rights.

REPORTER:

Will the Government be releasing a cost-benefit... [inaudible] of the grand final before it goes into caretaker mode?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look I understand those negotiations are commercial-in-confidence, but what I understand is also that the modelled economic contribution is much greater than the contribution that we've made to the cost of putting the final on. And I think all Queenslanders want to make sure that we do a really good job of this. We're custodians of a very, very special day for Victorians, and we want to make sure that we do a really good job, that we take care of it for them. We want to see them able to watch their great game, their great final, on their TV screens live from the Gabba, and I'm sure that we will, as we always do, put on a really fantastic event.

REPORTER:

Sorry, just on that modelling. Can you just explain that? Given it looks like the border may be closed, I mean I'm not an economist but usually you need people to come from elsewhere to spend the money. If it's Queenslanders spending Queensland money in Queensland, how are we making money off the AFL grand final if it's two Melbourne teams?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

First of all, that may be an economic contribution that people weren't otherwise making. But people will still be able to travel to Queensland from the other states and territories that are open. And the AFL is very popular in places like South Australia and Tasmania, and so I understand that that modelling has been done, that it says that this festival of footy we'll get to experience here, not just in Brisbane but right around the state, will make a very valuable contribution to the state.

REPORTER:

So how's it any difference – we've got three AFL games back to back over one weekend, [inaudible] 20,000 that are happening now, [inaudible] 16-20,000 in there. How is it any different now?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

People will travel from around the state as well as around the country to go to what will be an historic event. You know, more than a century since this game has only ever been played in Melbourne to see it played in Brisbane at the Gabba I think is great for the state and I think it's pretty hard to challenge that something like that won't make an economic contribution. Just think about the promotion that it will bring Queensland and our Good to Go campaign nationally. That in and of itself has an enormous value. You just can't buy that kind of promotion for our state – to have the Gabba, to have Queensland beamed live into TV sets right around the country, right around the world, you know, it's something Queenslanders should be very proud of.

REPORTER:

Gladys Berejiklian has said that Queensland's been unwilling to budge on any border issue and that the south east is more of a threat to northern New South Wales than the other way around, what do you say to that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yesterday New South Wales reported 17 new cases of COVID-19. We reported yesterday two, today two. It would be much harder for us to manage outbreaks, clusters like the one we are if we had cases coming in from other states. And so it's really important, those border restrictions are really important. Those border restrictions are really important. I work... I've worked really closely with the New South Wales Health Minister. I know our Chief Health Officer works very closely with the New South Wales Chief Health Officer to manager those kinds of border issues. I've said to you before that those that make it into the public discussion are a very, very small proportion of those that get dealt with and managed behind the scenes. I think it's also important to remember that New South Wales has its borders to Victoria closed at the moment. So New South Wales knows how challenging it can be to manage these border issues. In fact, we assisted them when they put those border restrictions in place, but I'd underline that it is Queensland and the other states and territories with their borders closed whose economies have fared the best. And that's what was borne out in the data that was released yesterday. And so, not only is it benefitting Queenslanders to have Queensland kept safe for Queenslanders, but it's benefitting the whole national economy.

REPORTER:

Is Coralee running at the state election?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, as I understand it, Coralee is Labor's preselected and nominated candidate for the state election. I've heard no announcements otherwise.

REPORTER:

Do you think that it's a cheap play that the Labor Party is using these border closures as a campaign strategy?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Not at all. We have, throughout this entire year now – more than I think 210 days – we have managed this pandemic with only one thing in mind and that is keeping Queenslanders safe so that we can keep Queenslanders at work and that's what we continue to do.

REPORTER:

So it will be an election strategy going forward? Playing up your response to the pandemic?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Our decisions, whether they relate to local declarations of hotspots or how we manage the health response locally or restricting people coming from other states with larger number of case numbers, our decisions are made by our Chief Health Officer each and every day and in the case of borders, at the end of every month with only one thing in mind and that is how to keep Queenslanders safe.

REPORTER:

Can I ask a question to Minister de Brenni?

REPORTER:

Oh, I have one too.

REPORTER:

Me too.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Go for it.

REPORTER:

There's been some calls from Tenants Queensland to extend that eviction period by three months. What do you think?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Well, we would all remember that National Cabinet made the decision to extend a moratorium on evictions for residential tenancies and I think that was an incredibly important decision to take at that time. We were all asked to stay in our homes and not move around. The measures that the Palaszczuk Government put in place through a consultative process with representatives of both tenants and property owners have been very, very effective. They have contributed significantly to the health outcomes that we've seen in Queensland that has kept people at work. We have been constantly reviewing those arrangements throughout the course of the pandemic. At the start we set up a COVID-19 housing security sub-committee with representatives from right across the property sector – Tenants Queensland and the REIQ – and they have been reviewing the effectiveness of those measures and they continue to do that. Currently some of those measures are due to expire on the 29th of September. That's some time away. We'll continue to work with the housing security sub-committee to consider whether or not any of those measures need to be extended and of course, we'll continue to take on board the decisions of the National Cabinet and primarily the advice of the Chief Health Officer when it comes to keeping people in their homes safe.

REPORTER:

Do you need to legislate that next week if that's the last week of Parliament or can you do with a regulation or a piece of paperwork?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

No. A lot of these matters are allowed to be done by regulation and of course, there are measures that we can take into account throughout the caretaker period as well. Look, what we've learnt from this pandemic is that it's a rapidly changing environment and our responsibility is to respond with agility with the purpose of keeping Queenslanders safe so we can keep them in work. We've done that in respect of a whole range of sectors whether it's construction, whether it's residential tenancies or commercial tenancies, and so we'll just have to keep doing that until the pandemic concludes.

REPORTER:

The 29th isn't that far away, when do you expect [inaudible]?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Look, we'll make decisions on that over the next couple of weeks and we'll have more to say on that. There are some elements of the reforms that we've put in place which I think are incredibly positive reforms where there is real consensus around. Like the reforms that we put in place to protect Queenslanders experiencing domestic and family violence. Part of the conversation that we're having with tenants' representatives and property representatives is whether or not we should make those enduring provisions. I very much support that, but the introduction of those measures at the start of the pandemic, we were able to introduce them with just a few days' notice. And so going forward we'll have to continue to respond. As you heard from the Chief Health Officer earlier, we'll make decisions on a regular basis based on the prevailing circumstances of the day. And so we'll just keep doing that. We'll watch it closely but ultimately the decisions that we take will be based around keeping Queenslanders safe.

REPORTER:

Residents have expressed outrage in the paper this morning about overdevelopment and houses being crammed into the Redlands area. Particularly two homes on Broadwater Terrace which have just centimetres between them. Are you concerned that the development code isn't up to scratch? Is Council doing enough to make sure Redlands isn't overdeveloped?

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Fair enough. I'm not familiar with those particular developments and of course, everybody around the globe is looking for more and more affordable places to live. Queensland is the number one place in the country where people want to come and live at the moment and we're still seeing people wanting to come here for jobs, for education, for the great health services that are provided here and so some of those small lot housing developments make those home affordable. It is a responsibility of councils to make sure that they get their planning schemes right. And of course, I'm interested always to ensure that properties are built with a level of sustainability and liveability for those Queenslanders that call them home. So I'm happy to have a look into any of the particular circumstances but I know that the housing industry is keen to ensure that we continue to see new homes being built. In fact, an interesting statistic that I've picked up this morning is that there has been a 15 per cent increase in the number of Queensland Home Warranty Schemes written this year compared to this time in 2019. And what that signifies is that people will continue to invest in their homes, new homes and renovations. That's great news for those tradies working in the construction industry in Queensland.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

All good? Thank you.

MINISTER DE BRENNI:

Thank you everybody.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 4 September 2020

Duration: 22 minutes approx.

E&OE

PREMIER:

Good morning everybody, and good morning to all of our listeners out there as well. So in some excellent news for Queensland today, can I say that we've had zero overnight cases. Well done Queensland, and this is exactly the hard work of everybody that's getting us to this point. But of course, we know that we're still not out of the woods yet, but I'm so pleased that we have got zero cases today. That means our active cases are 25, our total confirmed cases are 1128, and in the last 24 hours we have had 13,778 tests. So once again a big thank you to everybody who's gone out there and been tested.

So of course we have our specialist care unit that will go live today. We understand that of course this is a very, very difficult for families. I know that, people know that, and I want to make sure that if people in northern New South Wales need to get to those specialist appointments we have a special dedicated unit that will be there for them. That will go live today. There is a team of eight specialists – that will involve doctors, nurses, paramedics and also social workers, because this is often a distressing time for people. I know that, my Government knows that, and we are here to help people during this critical time. In total, in the unit for exemptions we have a team of 80 people working on this. This is about the Government working in the best interests of families during these very difficult times. We did not cause this pandemic. This is a world pandemic. No one asked for this. We know that families are not seeing each other at the moment. There are international borders up. Scott Morrison has put out that that is going to be extended for another three months. So families are not going to be united for Christmas, and that is going to be very tough on families. And we know it's going to be tough on families over the next few months because we are in this global pandemic.

The other issue I just wanted to address before handing over to Dr Young is that we've had some concerns about borders going to Moree, and of course we want to make sure that we are putting the best interests of these young people front and centre. And that is why we will be adding Moree to our travel bubble. This is going to be great news for those families to ensure that they can be home for school holidays.

REPORTER:

Is that for boarding school students?

PREMIER:

Yes, boarding school students. Yep. So I'm happy to hand over to Dr Young and then we'll take some questions.

DR YOUNG:

So we're now eight months into this pandemic, and we unfortunately know we've got quite a while to go. But here in Queensland, we do have it under control. So no new cases overnight is excellent. So at the moment we have 30 cases related to that cluster – that's the cluster with the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and the cluster with the training academy, and we've been working through that to make sure that we didn't get chains of transmission related to either of those clusters. We're now down to 25 active cases, so we've already seen people from those clusters have their disease get better and resolve, which is really good and we need to keep that going.

So I know that those restrictions are difficult for those aged care facilities in particular, but they are so important. So we'll be keeping a very, very close eye on that aged care facility at Laidley. The staff there, with the support of the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service, did a fantastic job, and we hope with all of that work that none of those residents will get COVID-19 because we know that our residents who live in aged care are the most vulnerable residents. And we've now had, each time we've had a cluster, we have one aged care facility involved, and that's where we have to focus so much of our intention. That is critical. So I am very sorry that people can't go and visit their relatives in aged care homes when something like this happens, but it's just vital that we keep those people safe because unfortunately we have seen that once it gets into an aged care facility you do see deaths. So that's tragic. So I ask people just to be patient a bit longer and we will open those facilities to visitors again as soon as we possibly can. So today is the first day of zero cases related to those two clusters, we just need to follow that going forward.

Then a few other things. I've been working very, very closely with my counterpart in New South Wales and we've been sharing a lot of information, and with that information I'm very confident that Moree is a safe place to add into our border zone that we're looking at for New South Wales. And we know that's particularly important – I went and looked into it in great detail because unfortunately when that supermarket burnt down they didn't have a lot of options. They of course could travel into Queensland, but the distances, if you look at them, it would be quicker for them to travel down to Moree. So, for a number of reasons, but the most important reason of all, of course, is that it's safe for us to do that. So Moree will be included in the New South Wales border zone going forward. Remembering of course that this could change, but at this point in time New South Wales does have control of their outbreak and they've been able to limit it to other parts of New South Wales. The risk of course is that people in those other parts can travel up into the northern part of New South Wales, but I discussed that risk every day with my counterpart in New South Wales and I know what is happening and they're very proactive in sorting that through.

Then I did want to mention to make sure that people understand that this in place. Last week we treated 900 New South Wales residents in our hospitals in Queensland along the border. We are continuing to provide essential and emergency healthcare to people who live in northern New South Wales because we've always done that. Traditionally, Queensland provides that care. There has been no change to that. Whatever people may hear or learn

about, that has not changed. So that's why we've stood up that specialist unit to make sure that people, if they don't know, that they immediately seek advice and they don't delay that necessary and essential healthcare. I am in the health business. I am the Chief Health Officer, so of course I'm always going to make sure that people can get the healthcare they need, and they are getting it. And I assure every Queenslanders that of course you're getting good, solid, safe healthcare, and we are providing healthcare in a very, very safe way to people from northern New South Wales. Our hospitals are managing those people so there is no risk to anyone else who comes to any of our facilities, so that's very important as well.

So I also wanted to mention the fantastic work that's been done by Queenslanders throughout the state coming forward to get tested if they're unwell. We're seeing every single day around 10,000 Queenslanders come forward, and that is just critical. I've said this many times, we have to find the first case in the cluster, not the 30th case. It's the first case so then we can stop that chain of transmission so we don't get more and more cases. So please, just keep coming forward. Any symptoms – you would have seen recently we've got people with unusual symptoms, you know, a bit of abdominal pain – so any symptom, please come forward and get tested. You don't need to come forward and get tested if you have no symptoms. If you are perfectly well, unless a health officer asks you to get tested because you're in a high-risk cohort, you're in one of those aged care facilities or one of those outbreaks, you do not need to come forward and get tested if you are perfectly well. But any symptom at all or any fever, it's really important to come forward and get tested. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That I am still concerned about the number of cases that are occurring every single day in both Victoria and New South Wales. Although we are seeing some encouraging signs of those numbers reducing, there are still too many cases, I believe, for us to be able to safely open the border between Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and ACT because we know, unfortunately, that one case can immediately lead to a lot of cases. I still believe, although we didn't have definitive evidence, I still believe that it was that Melbourne cluster that led to the most recent two clusters. So we've gone from three people who returned from Melbourne, to now 35 in those three clusters. So we can't afford to have a single case. If a single case comes from New South Wales or Victoria and they go into a high-risk setting like an aged care facility, we could immediately have an outbreak and we could have deaths, so we really have to be careful. If we look at the rest of the country, there aren't cases. So it's fine for our borders to be open for the rest of the country, although I noticed that of course some borders are closed still to Queensland.

REPORTER:

Just on the AFL hotel that is causing all the controversy, could anyone book the whole hotel out if they had the means, rather than going into the hotel single room?

DR YOUNG:

We've done that where we've got some COVID Safe Plans. So we have similar arrangements in place for agriculture, that we have people who are quarantining on farm or in agricultural colleges, because we need to keep our agriculture industry going. We've got similar arrangements for our resources and mining. We've got similar... they're all different, I mean, every single arrangement is done fit for purpose so we can keep that industry going. Now in terms specifically of the AFL, this is what we agreed to at national discussions at AHPPC in terms of setting up hubs. So that was the agreement that people could travel across borders associated with, not only the AFL, but the NRL, and for some other sports as long as they kept together in that bubble. And you might have seen, where there have been breaches, those codes have been absolutely right on top of it immediately. So, they've managed this very, very well. So, yes, depending what the industry is and what the benefit to Queensland is, because we're all about trying to keep our economy going as much as it can, but being safe. Our first priority has always got to be about the safety and the health response, because if we don't have that, we can't have any of these other things.

REPORTER:

Premier, given what Dr Young said about the other states, I am assuming we won't be backing down on National Cabinet [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

My understanding is that there are no decisions that are being made today, it is a discussion. But I think Queensland has done extremely well by relying on the expert health advice of Dr Young. And let me make it very clear, I will not be changing that course anytime soon because you have seen the great results that have been occurring in Queensland.

REPORTER:

Given the pile on, and you in particular, received over the last 24 to 48 hours, [inaudible] form of bullying [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

I will let others make comment about that. But can I just say, can I thank Queenslanders? I have been, I am really overwhelmed with the number of emails that have been coming into the office, personally hand-written cards, that is what keeps me going.

REPORTER:

Has it been unfair?

PREMIER:

Once again, that is for others to judge and for them to make up their minds. I get up every day, and I rely on the best health advice to look after this state.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

I reject that because we have the best interests of the public and the community at heart. I have just been up in Cairns. I spent two and a half days up there going around meeting people, talking to people, and I am just absolutely overwhelmed by the number of people coming up and just saying thank you for keeping us safe.

REPORTER:

Premier, what do you say to people then, [inaudible] we need to get to a point where we learn to live with the virus [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

The national, the Deputy Chief Health Officer came out and said the aim was no community transmission. That is what the Deputy National Chief Health Officer said. And we have seen that happen in other states and territories and my focus has always been, as a country, we should be focused on the risk areas and that is Victoria and New South Wales. And we should be putting all of our energies into that. Now let me also just say this, there has been a federal court case that has said the states have a right to put in place border measures because if the virus is allowed in, it poses a huge risk to the community. That is a Federal Court decision that has backed in what the states are doing. So, I think it is a bit disingenuous for this heightened criticism that is coming from a whole lot of levels when our fundamental concern is to look after Queenslanders and to make sure that they are safe during this time. And as Dr Young said, there is a high risk when there is an outbreak of it going into aged care homes. I do not want to see what has happened in our aged care sector in New South Wales and in Victoria, happen here in Queensland. That would be a nightmare. These are people's families, they are their uncles, their aunts, their mothers, their fathers, their grandparents. I don't want to see that here and Queenslanders don't want to see that here.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] such a public mood on the AFL Grand Final given the uproar over this 400-odd [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Patrick, let me say this, whoever won that Grand Final would've had the exact same restrictions put in place. If it had been New South Wales, if it had been South Australia, if it had been Western Australia, these were national agreements, agreed by the National Cabinet and the health professionals. So, you know, it is almost as if we're being singled out because we won it. I mean the economic benefit to Queensland is enormous. There are other parts of the world where there is no sport happening, there is no business happening, right? This is in Queensland because we are focussed on the health response. Our economy is able to do better than in other states. Look at the state final demand the other day, the states that had border measures in place did better than other states. And you only have to look at South Australia and Queensland for that, and Western Australia.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

It is relentless, it is intimidating, but I will not be intimidated.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] months from now, we know that unfortunately we are still going to be probably without a vaccine and will be subject to future border restrictions as well, but so far this round of border restrictions have been different to the first round. Can you just clarify, are these restrictions going to be different every time, or are you working towards a framework, for example, that would ensure a streamlined process for every time you need to [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

I think I answered the question previously by saying if we all focussed our efforts on Victoria and New South Wales and getting the community transmission under control, right, to the extent that there was no community transmission – and that is the advice of the Deputy Health Officer of the country – that is the aim, they moved from elimination to suppression to no community transmission. If we focus on that, then there will come a time when everybody could open up.

REPORTER:

What you're saying is [inaudible].

PREMIER:

Exactly, I think Victoria and New South Wales need to get everything under control there, and then the whole country can open up. It is a very simple...

REPORTER:

What about the ACT?

PREMIER:

Well the ACT is part of New South Wales and Victoria.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] today on Moree [inaudible]. That's going to be welcomed by that town without a supermarket. But doesn't that show you need a national approach when you've got a Queensland decision..?

PREMIER:

No, because what we have is the Chief Health Officers... See, I think what people are forgetting here is the Chief Health Officers speak regularly and they work through these issues. There is a lot of work that happens behind the scenes that the public don't see, Okay? And as Dr Young was saying, hundreds of people from northern New South Wales are getting the treatment they need at our hospitals. But where... Sorry?

REPORTER:

You mentioned before that [inaudible] times have been relentless. What sort of personal toll has that taken on you?

PREMIER:

Oh, I get out of bed every day and do my job but my family are very upset. But, you know I just tell them to hang in there.

REPORTER:

Gladys Berejiklian described that benchmark to reopen the border as a pretty tall order. Do you agree with that? What did you make of that?

PREMIER:

Look, that's a matter for her. But what I said very clearly is if we as a nation can focus on Victoria and New South Wales and get everything under control there, then the whole country can open up. And I don't think anyone would be against that. I don't think you'd hear criticism from anyone about that.

REPORTER:

But it's a very tall order to get that community transmission under control in Victoria and New South Wales.

PREMIER:

But that's what the Deputy Chief Health Officer said publicly.

REPORTER:

The New South Wales Premier also wants the free movement of farm workers.

PREMIER:

We already have exemptions in place for our agricultural workers. It's been in place since the 22nd of August. We have worked thoroughly through those issues, so I don't know what they're talking about.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] shut down, [inaudible]. It's this arrival of the officials that's really caused a lot of anger [inaudible]. How would you explain... how would you care for those AFL officials quarantine [inaudible] but everybody else quarantines in a hotel [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Because they put in place a plan, and that plan has been nationally accepted. If South Australia had won the right to host the grand final, the exact same things, is my understanding, would have applied there. So it was a national benchmark.

REPORTER:

Can I ask Dr Young to explain just how is that quarantine when they're mingling together in a pool? Why can't people in hotel quarantine, why can't they mingle in the pool?

PREMIER:

Well I'll hand over to Dr Young about that. We do have to get prepared for National Cabinet, so we might make that the last question. Dr Young?

REPORTER:

Yeah, can you just explain how that is quarantine? They're all mingling together...

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Of course they are.

REPORTER:

...you don't let people in hotel quarantine...

DR YOUNG:

Can I answer? Yes. So the reason is that they have been mingling in Victoria, so they can continue to mingle here and they wear they risk. So if one of them becomes positive – so they're getting regularly tested as per the protocol – if one of them becomes positive then they're all into individual quarantine. So that's the process. Whereas you wouldn't want that in another hotel. So we've got 24 hotels in Queensland that we're quarantining people in, and people come in on different days. So you'll have, you know, 300 today and then 300 tomorrow. So if they were all to mingle and one of them becomes positive, as happens fairly regularly, then that entire hotel would be shut down, everyone in it, for another 14 days. So you'd have people who were due to be released that day who all of a sudden would be kept there for another 14 days. Whereas all of these people have come in together, they will get regularly tested, and then on day 14 if no one has been positive then they can all leave that quarantine. So it's a totally, totally different situation.

REPORTER:

What about hotel staff at that hotel? Are they allowed to go home each not or are they in quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

They are not mingling with the hotel staff. So the hotel staff provide the food and then leave them to that. So there is no mingling between those people in quarantine and any of the hotel staff. You could probably go on and look at the protocol that was agreed by the AFL right at the start, and that's all documented.

PREMIER:

Sorry, we have to go.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young and QAS Spokesperson Peta

Date: 6 September 2020

Duration: 24 minutes approx.

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Today we are confirming two new cases of COVID-19 in Queensland. We are also confirming that three have recovered meaning that our total number of active cases now stands at 25. We have had 1131 cases so far and in the last testing period we tested 6062 people. The two new cases, one is a sibling, a female sibling of student at the Staines College known to have been a contact with somebody who has COVID-19 and was already in quarantine. The other is a 32-year-old nurse from the Ipswich Hospital known to have had contact with COVID-19 positive patients.

I can confirm that yesterday on Russell Island we tested 152 people and given the population Russell Island is about 5000, that is a very good, swift response from the community there and we thank them for that. We urge them to monitor the health very closely and if they have any symptoms whatsoever to go and get tested. The pop-up fever clinic will be open today. The Mater has a testing clinic, they're open today and they also have a clinic on Macleay Island and that will be available to them. I have to say how disappointed I am to see that the LNP in Redlands was breaching the COVID restriction rules on the very day that we confirmed a positive case had been in the community. I want to turn to Ipswich Hospital which has borne the brunt of this most recent outbreak, which now stands at 33 cases. Four of those cases as of today are staff members of the hospital. 222 staff are now in quarantine as a result of their contact, contact tracing of those four staff. 27 of the staff of the emergency department who had contact with that first woman from the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre are now back at work. But with more than 200 of hospital staff in quarantine, that has an inevitable impact on the rostering at the hospital and so in order to be able to keep our health staff safe, a number of appointments scheduled for this week at Ipswich Hospital will either be relocated to other services or rescheduled and I would just apologise to those patients whose appointments will be disrupted. I apologise to them but also explain that the reason we are doing that is to keep them safe and keep our hospital staff safe by putting them in quarantine as we have to.

Today we have seen a senior LNP frontbencher John-Paul Langbroek come out and call for Queensland's borders to be reopened. This is in defiance of the supposed claims by the LNP leader that she supports our strong border stance. Well you can't pretend to support our strong border stance and have every other senior member of the LNP out there criticising us and attacking us. You can't have it both ways. It has to be one way or the other. So if John-Paul Langbroek disagrees with Deb Frecklington then Deb Frecklington should have the guts to

sack him from her frontbench, otherwise he's just really calling out the truth of what we know and that is that the LNP does not support our strong border stance.

We are also announcing today that the Queensland Ambulance Service will begin bolstering our testing efforts for COVID-19. We have learned throughout this metropolitan outbreak that we need a greater and more flexible ability to stand up more fever clinics quickly and do more testing quickly and so while our first response will continue to be our hospital and health services and of course our private pathology services who have been fantastic also, we will begin using our ambulance service where we need to in order to be able to make testing more convenient for people and that will begin hopefully shortly when we start making more testing available throughout those southern Moreton Bay islands and the Redlands.

So I'm just going to ask Kim Richards to say a few words about how the Redlands community is feeling, particularly those island communities. We have Peter from the ambulance service to talk about how they will be assisting more in our COVID-19 response and of course I should acknowledge that they have been crucial and vital and central to our response so, and then of course the Chief Health Officer is available with much more detail.

KIM RICHARDS:

Thank you Deputy Premier. I'd like to thank the Deputy Premier and Queensland Health for their rapid response yesterday on Russell Island yesterday to the news of the active case. At 3.30 yesterday afternoon they commenced testing, and as the Deputy Premier stated over 150 tests were completed. I would like to congratulate my community on their calm response and responsiveness to being tested. It has been terrific. Our frontline services have done an amazing job. Our SES yesterday and our Redlands [inaudible] champions also did a fantastic job in supporting the Metro South health team. So it has been a terrific response. I encourage all Redlanders, if you are feeling unwell, please make sure you go and get tested. The flexibility that is being applied to testing and particularly on our unique and beautiful Redlands Coast islands has been fantastic, it has been fantastic, it's been rapid and dynamic. Again, I thank the Deputy Premier for all the work that has been done to support my Redlands community.

QAS SPOKESPERSON:

Queensland Ambulance Service is happy to utilise their expertise in improving the capacity to getting the community tested in the outbreak of COVID-19. We wish to ensure that the community has rapid access to these testing clinics and we want to maintain that people should get tested, maintain their 1.5m social distancing and ensure that they are utilising their hand washing techniques.

DR YOUNG:

Good morning. We have seen a really good response over the last 24 hours. So we had that case yesterday, a lady who lives on Russell Island, and I want to commend her for her response. She has, after hearing all of the messages about if you can't social distance, wear a mask. She has been doing that, and I am sure that will stand that community in good stead. It is really important for the next week at least that anyone on Russell Island who develops any symptoms at all, comes forward immediately and gets tested. We saw 152 people do exactly

that yesterday. That is excellent. We need to see people over the next week, if they have any symptoms, come forward to that clinic that has been stood up. A number of other clinics have also been stood up, similarly on Macleay Island, just in case people from there of course have visited Russell Island. But it is really important that anyone with any symptoms comes forward and gets tested, just as we work through this current cluster of cases related to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and the Queensland Corrective Services Academy.

So we have had another two cases related to those classes. In both situations the people involved have been close contacts. In one it is a household contact situation where someone has been living in a household where one of those Staines Memorial students live. So that is a clear transmission within a household. Then the second case is one of the nurses at the Ipswich Hospital who has been looking at one of those known cases in the hospital. We know where the two cases are from. It is very, very important people when they are close contacts do quarantine and that is what we are seeing happening. So now we have 222 of our staff at the Ipswich Hospital in quarantine. Which does mean there is some pressure on the capacity of the hospital but they are managing that absolutely brilliantly. There will be some changes, but people don't need to do anything. If there is a change to their care that is needed, they need to be referred to another facility for an operation, for instance, they will get a phone call. People don't need to worry – if they haven't received any phone calls they should just progress with whatever care they were needing. And, of course, anyone who needs emergency care, the Ipswich hospital is fully open for emergency care. No one should delay that. We know that delaying your healthcare in an emergency situation can lead to bad outcomes so there is absolutely no need to do that.

All of these situations that we have planned for, we are now eight months into this pandemic, we have had an enormous planning process and all those plans have been utilised now. We are in a very different situation to what we were in back in March. We do now have plans so people need to follow those plans. If they are unwell, they need to immediately get tested and thank you very much to the QAS who are going to assist us in being able to put out even more clinics when they are needed and to rapidly respond. If you're unwell, get tested, maintain social distancing, 1.5 metres, using hand sanitiser or washing your hands, that is critical. If we all do that, as we're seeing people doing when we talk go them about the contact tracing we need to do, that is absolutely critical. And then make sure that you follow the COVID Safe Plans. I know businesses are working very, very hard to adhere to those COVID Safe Plans – we all need to do that. And we do need to minimise the numbers of people in our homes because that is where we're seeing transmission happening. So really and truly, a maximum of 10 people in your home unless you live outside the south east corner where you can have up to 30. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, these two new cases today, were they in isolation or quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

One of them definitely was, yes. We're just working out the contact details.

REPORTER:

Do you have anything [inaudible] over their movements in the past two weeks?

DR YOUNG:

Not for that one. She's been in isolation. We're just doing some further contact tracing for the nurse.

REPORTER:

What about the second one?

DR YOUNG:

Yep. The first one who was at home because their sibling was one of those early confirmed cases in Staines Memorial College, and we are seeing continued spread within households, although that spread happened I believe before we knew about that confirmed case in that Staines Memorial College student. So it's not happened subsequent to that.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, what do you make of the protesters yesterday?

DR YOUNG:

It's disappointing as always, and I understand a number were fined. I know police are taking these protests extremely seriously. I just wish the protesters would take them as seriously. This is really important. It would be awful for a small group of people, and I understand it was a relatively small group, to undo the work done by 5.1 million Queenslanders. So really and truly this is not the time to protest. We can protest differently today. We're not like in the last pandemic. Back in 2009, we didn't have the social media and the internet ability that we've got today. These protesters could protest online rather than coming out and risking everyone else's health.

REPORTER:

How old is the sister of the contact? Is it a child?

DR YOUNG:

She's in her 20s.

REPORTER:

And with the... I guess with this news of another nurse contracting it. Do you have concerns about how they're dealing with patients and if they're using PPE appropriately?

DR YOUNG:

No, I don't have concerns about PPE and I don't have concerns about the training. This is just such a difficult virus. It really is quite infectious and we're seeing that time and time again. And we know from all the cases that have happened in Melbourne, there's been large numbers of healthcare workers. This is a difficult time for our healthcare workers, and I'm extraordinarily grateful to every single one of them for the care that they're providing day in day out at risk to themselves and their families. So we've put in as much as we can to support

those healthcare workers. For instance, if healthcare workers don't want to quarantine at home with their families, we organise for them to quarantine in hotels. So we had that with that group who came back from Melbourne, a number of them chose to quarantine in hotels, at our cost of course, not at their cost. So we're working with them about what is best for them and their families. But this is a difficult time for our healthcare workers.

REPORTER:

And to clarify, it's believed that she got the virus from someone who came into the emergency department?

DR YOUNG:

No, one of the people was being treated in a ward.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, what do you make of calls for borders to reopen and how likely do you think it is that Queensland could open up by Christmas? What would you like to see?

DR YOUNG:

It would be fantastic if we could open up by Christmas. It would just be brilliant because that would mean that New South Wales and Victoria have their cases under control. We're doing everything we can to assist those two states and they are doing a marvellous job. They really are. They're getting on top of each case and contact tracing and managing them. But they've just got so many to manage at the moment. We can see here in Queensland. I think that all of our cases are most likely – I don't have definitive proof – but are most likely to one of the three young women who went down to Melbourne. And look at the amount of work that is taking for us in Queensland. So you imagine the amount of work that both New South Wales and Victoria are having to do today, but they are doing it and they are doing it exceptionally well. So I am confident that with all that work we should, I hope, be able to open our borders for Christmas because I know people want to get back together with their families, they want to share Christmas with their families. And Australians are very mobile people. We know that. There are Australians with families scattered all over the country. So absolutely, yes, that absolutely is what I would love to see happen and we will do whatever we can to help Victoria and New South Wales have that happen.

REPORTER:

When do you expect to give the next advice to the Premier about what [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So we do that formally at the end of every single month, and we work that through. But essentially, the Premier is getting advice every single day about what is happening in those southern states.

REPORTER:

Have you had any more time to consider the national hotspot definitions, and how much [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Oh definitely, yes. So we've been working quite a while at AHPPC about what it means and how best we can explain it and manage it. There are a lot of issues. Hotspots depend about what you want to use them for. So it's really... it goes into a lot of detail and there are so many different variables that need to be considered. And it changes. The hotspots we are looking at today are totally different to the hotspots we were considering back in March, because back in March it was all due to importation of cases from overseas. Now it's all due to local cases. So it's a difficult process but we're continuing to work that all through together.

REPORTER:

Do you think it's inevitable that there will be more healthcare workers that are infected with COVID?

DR YOUNG:

It's not inevitable, of course it's not, and we're working to make sure it doesn't happen, but there is a risk that it will continue.

REPORTER:

And have you, I guess, done a bit of a debrief as to how that might have occurred? How the transition has happened – do you know it did happen?

DR YOUNG:

No, that's being worked through at the moment for the four of those cases to just work out how it might have happened and see if there's anything we can do to make it less likely in the future. But we've just got to remember that Victoria has seen well over 1000 cases. So we've seen our cases here, and every single case we regret, of course we do, but we will work through if there's anything more we can do.

REPORTER:

And can you let us I know – I know you said you're still working through the contact tracing – but what general area that nurse had been in when you believe she was infectious?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we thought it was the pediatric ward, so we've already worked very, very closely with the Children's Hospital and they're now providing care to children from that area. So that's all happening and in place and has been since we knew about it.

REPORTER:

Will there be an updated list on places that [inaudible] went to...

DR YOUNG:

Of course.

REPORTER:

Yep. When do you expect that?

DR YOUNG:

That'll come through as soon as we've got the contact tracing underway and we've got any more details. But we've got to remember that the Staines Memorial College related case, we don't believe that that individual was out in the community. We just need to double-check and go through all that. We always double and triple check everything, but at this stage we don't believe there'll be any additional information needed for that case.

REPORTER:

And just to clarify, sorry. She was working in the pediatric ward in Ipswich Hospital?

DR YOUNG:

She's had contact with staff working in the pediatric ward?

REPORTER:

So how many staff have had to isolate or quarantine as the result of just one nurse?

DR YOUNG:

So far we've had a total of 222. I don't know the breakdown for the individuals.

REPORTER:

Do we have all of the results back from the residential staff members at the aged care home in Laidley?

DR YOUNG:

We have the first round of testing for those 44 residents who were actually in the facility at the time. They're all negative. We're about to do a second round of testing on those residents, so that will come through. At the moment we're still going through all of the staff.

REPORTER:

With the nursing case, do you believe that she stayed at home from when she was sick or do you think that she may have been at hospital while she was symptomatic working?

DR YOUNG:

She's been excellent, so I'm confident that all of that's in hand.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, can I just ask you a couple of things. The Budget update expected tomorrow. Has there been any recovery? What are we expecting?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I don't think you'd expect me to provide any of those details today. That'll be the Treasurer's job tomorrow.

REPORTER:

Just as an overview though. Can we expect anything – new spending or any new measures for coronavirus?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The Treasurer will have all of that to outline tomorrow. I mean obviously Queensland hasn't been immune to the global pandemic or the global economic repercussions. Obviously some of that detail will be outlined tomorrow, much of that detail will be outlined tomorrow. I think what we've seen in the Federal Government's own figures released last week was that Queensland performed better than other states, particularly better than those states that haven't closed their borders, haven't kept their communities as safe from COVID-19. More of those figures will be available tomorrow.

REPORTER:

Deputy Premier, how will the QAS and paramedics be actually helping these testing centres?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So I'm happy to let Peta talk to that in a bit more detail. But essentially, what we saw in the recent metropolitan outbreaks was a need to stand up fever clinics quickly and a desire to have as many as we can to make it as convenient as possible. You'll recall those days where some people had to wait four-five hours to get their test. We just don't want to see that happen again. The QAS is a state-wide service, a flexible resource that we can move around that is highly mobile, clearly highly mobile, and so it makes sense for us to deploy them to bolster our testing capability.

REPORTER:

Yes, if you could just explain I guess exactly what QAS will be doing with testing?

QAS SPOKESPERSON:

So QAS will be training up approximately 50 paramedics to be able to maintain clinics and increase the accessibility to the community to be able to provide COVID testing in that space.

REPORTER:

And will your paramedics go into existing centres, or will you create your own centres?

QAS SPOKESPERSON:

No, we'll create our own. We'll be able to utilise the infrastructure that we already have through our Emergency Management Unit. We'll be able to stand up and scale to whatever is appropriate in the time that Queensland Health identify that we need to.

REPORTER:

So is that like at ambulance stations across south east Queensland, or what sort of areas?

QAS SPOKESPERSON:

Depending on where the hotspot is or where cases have been identified, we'll be able to scale up where ever we need to. So we'll be utilising carparks, schools, anything like that that we can help and assist.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Format: Press conference
Topic: COVID-19 update
Speaker/s: Queensland Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young
Date: 10 September 2020
Duration: 20:01 minutes

E&OE

DR YOUNG:

Thank you very much for coming along this afternoon. I thought it was important to give a few updates. So the first piece of information is we have not had any new cases in Queensland overnight, which is exceptionally good news. We are not out of the risk period yet, but we are doing much, much better than I thought we would when I first was notified of this cluster. So, the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre cluster looks like it is well and truly in hand, and we should be able to declare it over in the next few days. So it looks as if none of the children who were in that centre have contracted the virus, which is very good, and it looks as if all of the staff have now been managed and we haven't seen any more spread.

Then we had the academy cluster, and again, that one is not complete yet but we are getting more confident we have managed to control that. Then we had the Arthur Gorrie Centre cluster there with a number of staff who were positive. Again, we are hopeful none of the prisoners have contracted that infection there, so that is good news. Then more recently of course, we had those staff at Ipswich Hospital who have tested positive. And now we have got a school there associated with that, so we are working through that. But it is really good news that today we have had no new cases.

Now, all of these I do unfortunately need to remind people, go back to one, possibly two young women who contracted the infection in Melbourne and brought it back into Queensland. That's the most likely scenario, and that's even more likely now that we have done so much testing out there and not found any other chains of transmission.

And indeed today, I'm very, very pleased to announce that we have done more than one million tests for COVID-19 in Queensland. So that is in the eight months that this pandemic virus has been circulating in Queensland. And I do want to thank every single Queenslanders – all one million – who have come forward to be tested for this infection. And that's what we have to keep doing. If we can find the first case, rather than the 40th case, we know we have got a good chance of getting on top of it. With this most recent cluster that started in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, we didn't find the first case there, we found subsequent cases. And that's why it has taken longer to get on top of this cluster than previous clusters. So I do ask every Queenslanders, please, if you are unwell come and get tested. Today in

Queensland you are far more likely to have COVID-19 than you are to have the flu. That's how much more the risk is for a Queenslander today. So that is very, very important.

Then the other thing I did want to briefly talk about is the development, and the fact that we have stood up, a specialist healthcare support centre for people who need to apply for exemptions. When we first went into this pandemic it was always thought that we would need to provide exemptions for various people to do things that were important, that weren't allowed for under our directions. The plan at that stage was there would be maybe one or two of these per day. And so I did them all personally myself because they were very important, because we know that providing exemptions results in a risk to the general Queensland population, and I am extremely risk-averse and I'm not going to ever do anything that puts the Queensland population at risk. So I took on that role of doing all of those exemptions myself.

Once we got up to a 100 of those per day I realised that was no longer feasible, although very, very important, just as important now as at the start of the pandemic. I believe that other people need to take on that role. So we have now stood-up that team. There are 80 people in that team who are providing that support to look at every single request for an exemption. And we are now getting thousands a day because people are wanting to come to Queensland or to be exempt from some of those directions within Queensland. And every single one of those exemption requests is taken extremely seriously.

There is one I would like to discuss specifically, and that is exemptions for funerals. Right at the start of this pandemic that was one of the hardest things that I had to face because we know that funerals are very, very high risk for transmission of the virus. So right at the start of this pandemic the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee put forward a protocol for funerals. So initially we only allowed 10 people to attend a funeral – I'm sure everybody remembers that. Then we expanded that to 20. And now, in Queensland we allow 100 people because we know how important it is that families and their friends can grieve together as a group – that is extremely important. But by doing that we have introduced a significant risk. We know that, and most recently we have seen in Sydney several clusters related to funerals down there. So we know having 100 people at a funeral is a risk.

And most recently, when we brought back those tightening of restrictions – people can only gather in groups of 10, limiting visitors to aged care facilities, disability care facilities, and hospitals, and increasing use of PPE – we did not change the restrictions for funerals. Knowing though that that is a risk. Now one thing I have always felt that has kept Queenslanders safer, and we are able to continue to have that increased risk of 100 people at a funeral, is that I have always been very, very, very careful in making sure that anyone at a higher risk of having COVID-19 does not attend a funeral. So those are people who come from hotspots interstate, or of course anyone who comes from overseas.

So although I understand the enormous toll this is taking on people who are coming here to Queensland to attend a funeral of a loved one, whether that be a relative or a friend, they can't do that until they have been in quarantine for 14 days, because the last thing I would want to happen is to have an outbreak at a funeral. And by definition, there are always older people attending funerals. They are the people we know will always attend funerals. So they're a very, very risky environment for spread of the virus because the nature of the service and what happens, and secondly because of the people who tend to attend those funerals. So I do

not want to see in Queensland any risk of people attending a funeral, getting exposed, getting COVID-19, and then going back to a vulnerable setting. Because people are able to – one of the exemptions for leaving an aged care facility is to attend a funeral. So that would be terrible. We have now had several outbreaks in aged care facilities in Queensland that we have been able to control. Thank goodness, because we have now seen that Australia's numbers of who have died as a result of COVID-19 have reached over 700 Australians. And we know a lot of those have happened in the last month, and a lot of them have happened in aged care facilities. And that's something I'm absolutely adamant that I will do everything I possibly can to stop happening in Queensland because every single death is a really difficult death for someone, including me. I don't want to see Queenslanders dying from COVID-19, that I could have prevented. I can't prevent every single death, but those that I can prevent, I'm absolutely adamant, and I make no apologies that will do my best to prevent.

Having said that, I also understand the awful situation for people who are coming into Queensland from interstate and overseas that can't attend a funeral to mourn their loved one. So we do have some processes in place to try and help with that. Of course, if they wish to, and the funeral home can support it, and a large number have, then they can go and have a private farewell with their loved one in the funeral home. That can be done, and has been done a number of times very safely due to the support of the funeral home. But they do need to wait 14 days before they can attend a funeral.

So I'm now happy to take any questions, if I can assist?

REPORTER:

Just in regards to the funeral [inaudible] who came up from Sydney to see the dad on Father's Day before he died. Did she get her exemption before her father died?

DR YOUNG:

I can't go into the specifics of any individual case. I'm sure you know me well enough by now. I'm not going to cause even more heartache to someone to have their private information discussed publicly. What I can say is that exemptions are given for people to come to Queensland to see dying relatives or close friends. But they need to go into quarantine if they come from one of the hotspots to do that, and then they are supported to go and visit their relative or friend if it's in a hospital that's supervised by the hospital – the hospital provides PPE. If it's in the person's home, then they need to just organise someone to assist them because we will provide them the PPE, but they need to organise someone to provide them some assistance on how to use that PPE.

REPORTER:

Dr, just clarifying that. That girl came from... Let's take Person A, just take Sarah out of it. Take Person A. They are in Canberra where there hasn't been cases for weeks. Person A leaves Canberra and comes straight through New South Wales and drives into Queensland. Why do they have to quarantine if they haven't been in a hotspot and nowhere near a hotspot?

DR YOUNG:

Canberra is defined as a hotspot because it is within the middle of New South Wales, and we know there are cases around them. And the other part is early on, you might remember there were a lot of cases in Batemans Bay and a lot of people in Canberra have weekend residences that they go to in Batemans Bay. So we have seen it happen. So unfortunately for people who live in Canberra, they are deemed as being in a hotspot and need to be managed as such because what we have to remember is that it is exposures two weeks ago that will then lead to the problem. So we are always trying to project two weeks in advance, which just makes it very difficult. So yes, it is very hard. I can understand that for people who live in Canberra, to understand why they can't freely travel into Queensland.

REPORTER:

Can you also explain that you gave her an exemption to see her father's body after the funeral. Explain what was surrounding the decision the make that?

DR YOUNG:

Right. It is all about your exposure to other people. So if the funeral home can facilitate it – and they have been wonderful. Can I say that our funeral homes and managers in this state have been very, very cooperative, both with the processes we have asked to put them in, but also with supporting grieving family members. So this is all about making sure that that person doesn't have interaction with other people. So the funeral home will supervise that, provide PPE and manage it so that person can grieve privately with their loved one.

REPORTER:

Sarah said it took basically 20 days for the exemption to come through. You've now [inaudible] thousands of applications coming through. What sort of timeframes are you looking at [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We are trying to get those as quick as we can. It is just the very, very large number that are coming through. And a lot of people will ring up and seek advice, and we have now got eight clinicians who are manning the phones 7:00am to 7:00pm, seven days a week to try and help that process and give advice to people about what they can expect so that they don't have to just wait for that formal piece of paper.

REPORTER:

A few people today are asking why the Premier is not standing up and you are instead. Are you taking a hit for her over these decisions?

DR YOUNG:

No, I just wanted to give some information this afternoon. I haven't stood up for the last few days because I have actually been very, very busy trying to work through these clusters and so it was offered to me that I might like to stand up and give some information and an update where we are because, in actual fact, I think we have done exceptionally well – far, far better than I had even hoped, knowing that everyone always does do well at start of this most recent cluster. And I think I can now see light at the end of the tunnel, which will be good because

we have got a lot of places locked down at the moment – all of our aged-care facilities, disability facilities, hospitals – and that is causing, I know, a lot of problems for people.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, did the Premier order you to do this press conference?

DR YOUNG:

No.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] the Premier's Office ask you to give that clarification?

DR YOUNG:

No, the Premier's Office didn't. My team here did.

REPORTER:

Is it true that one of your staff [inaudible] Sarah and she wasn't even supposed to be in the state [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I don't know that.

REPORTER:

Can you understand people's confusion when they see a [inaudible] AFL stars and movie stars and things like that are getting exemptions [inaudible] is there confusion about that?

DR YOUNG:

Anyone can come into Queensland who has got a reason to come in that meets one of our requirements. So, anyone can come to Queensland if they wish to see a dying relative or, indeed, a dying close friend. Then the next part of that exemption is what they need to do when they come. And that is the same. I have given class exemptions to people in the sporting industry for a whole range of codes because it is important that we start that work, but they all go into quarantine. I have given exemptions for people in entertainment and film because that is bringing a lot of money into this state. And can I say, we need every single dollar in our state. We need to make sure that our economy is going ahead as much as it can, as long as it is safe. So the first thing I do before I make a decision about anything, is it safe to the Queensland population? And if it is safe then I look at how it can be done, whether that is the AFL, the NRL, whether it is swimming, tennis – all of the sports. Cricket – I have recently because we are coming know that season. Whether it is any of those, whether it is entertainment industry, film industry, whether it is agriculture, whether it is resources and mining, construction. Anything that will benefit our community, because I actually believe that the economy has an enormous roll in determinants of health and the health outcomes for Queenslanders. But before I agree to anything, it is whether it is safe.

REPORTER

[Inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, no, because I will always give an exemption to someone who needs to come into the state because of a family reason. And I have done that regularly, and that will continue to happen under that new team. So I have had many, many exemptions from people who are wanting to come up to support their grandchildren who are having children and they haven't got parents here and they need to support them because they have got to go into hospital and look after other children. So there are lots and lots and lots of exemption requests to support family, to support close friends and they are always granted, but they are granted with a need for quarantine. No different to all of these other exemptions.

REPORTER

That was going to be my next question. Those people who are granted exemptions still need to quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

That's correct, yes.

REPORTER

When are we likely to see aged care [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

As soon as possible. So as soon as we can declare this recent cluster over, which will take a while longer, I would suggest at least another week, then we will be able to open up aged care. Now, I am just so glad we did that because I think we should be okay in that aged-care facility at Laidley. We not had any cases in the residents. It is not over yet, they are not through that risky period quite yet. But we have not had any to date. And that is only because we closed down our aged-care facilities very early on with this most recent cluster and we asked staff to wear PPE and to be very careful, and the staff member who tested positive was excellent, absolutely excellent. I couldn't have asked more. He followed the absolute textbook process and wore PPE and kept himself separate and he was just fantastic. So, we were, maybe I could say lucky there, but also we are just so careful in Queensland and I am so grateful that Queenslanders have gone along that journey. And by being careful every single time, I am absolutely convinced we have saved lives in Queensland.

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

Type: Press conference

Speakers: Deputy Premier and Health Minister Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 14 September 2020

Duration: 22 minutes 40 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

For the coronavirus update, I am really excited to confirm that it is our second day in a row of no new coronavirus cases in Queensland, which of course is a fantastic result as we continue to try to beat those connected clusters on the southside. We have 30 active cases, 19 of those managed by the West Moreton Health Service and five by Metro South. So, 24 of our 30 cases are in those southern and western suburbs of Brisbane. Our total remains 1149. In the last testing period we tested just 2934 samples which is well below that goal of 5000-10,000 tests a day, so we would just reiterate that message that anyone in Queensland with symptoms should go and get tested. The Chief Health Officer will outline some measure that we're putting in place in a few key suburbs related to those clusters where we hope additional people will get tested, just to make sure that there isn't any unidentified community transmission happening in those locations. You will all have seen, though, that while we have zero cases overnight here in Queensland, the World Health Organisation has confirmed that globally in the last 24 hours we had more new cases of COVID-19 than on any other day throughout this pandemic. This thing isn't over. In fact, it hadn't peaked. While sometimes it might feel like it's passed here in Queensland because we have done so well, we need to remember globally this pandemic is still getting worse, more people are still dying. Israel, for example, in a bid to deal with their second wave have gone back into lockdown. Their residents will only be allowed to move within 500 metres of their homes for the next three weeks, underlying just what could happen if we were to experience a second wave here in Queensland. That's precisely why we need to keep this virus out. I will ask the Chief Health Officer.

DR YOUNG:

Good morning. So, it is good news. No new cases overnight. It's, in fact, excellent news. But it's still too early to relax. We still have – and I'm concerned about it – some ongoing risk of transmission, particularly around the Ipswich area. So, I'm asking people today who live in Goodna, Redbank Plains or Redbank if they have any symptoms at all, it is really, really important that they come forward and get tested. So, we are looking at putting additional clinics in place, but at the moment there are several clinics that people can attend. And, remember, please, you can attend any clinic. You don't need to live in that location. If you have gone to work and you become unwell at work, or you are concerned, then just go to the nearest clinic and get yourself tested. So, I would like to repeat – that's Redbank Plains, Redbank, and Goodna. So, if you live in those locations, in particular, with any symptoms, please get tested. If you have been in those areas in the last 14 days and you have any symptoms, then get tested. The same message applies for the rest of the state. Any symptoms at all, it's really important that you immediately get tested. We want to find the first case in a cluster, not the 40th case because at that stage it is really, really hard to get on top of it. So, we've had some good news in that

those residents at Laidley aged care facility have come back negative for the next round of testing. We have also had good news in terms of the prisons and the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. Having said that, there were still some chains of transmission that we need to cap off, so we need to do that additional testing. This is a disease that we're learning more and more about every single day. So, we're now eight months in. We're learning a lot more. We're learning that this is not a disease of the respiratory system. That might be how it's transmitted in the main, but it's not flu. It affects every single cell in the body and leaves long-lasting problems for different organs in the body, whether that be the heart, the kidneys, the brain, the lungs. So, it is really important that we minimise the number of people who get this disease. Not just the number who are going to die from it, but the number who get it. That is really, really important. And that's why we have the very strict protocols that we have in Queensland for quarantine. This is about people not getting this disease. That is really important.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, I know [inaudible], what sort of toll has taken on you? We have heard reports you have had death threats?

DR YOUNG:

It has taken an enormous toll on me, but then this has taken an enormous toll on nearly every single person in our community. Every single person in our community in Queensland has had to give up an awful lot. And we can't see a clear end to this. So, we're going to all have to work this through together and work out how we can manage this as well go forward. I think this has been tough for everyone. And I do think everyone who's participated, because I know we've done more than a million tests to date, and every single time someone gets tested, they're giving up their freedom, while they wait for that result. So, this is a tough time for everyone. And I hope everyone has got a way of managing their mental health, of being able to talk to someone that they love, that they can work through issues with. Please reach out. We have the Care Army here in Queensland. We are fortunate, we have a lot of resources. We need to use all of them.

REPORTER:

How do you manage, Dr Young, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Well, actually, what helps me is that our government here in Queensland is prepared to support me to that extent is, I think, the support that they have shown to me and has made me feel much, much safer doing what I need to do and knowing that I'm supported in doing it.

REPORTER:

It must be tough [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Of course, it's tough. But, as I say, this is tough for an enormous number of people. And every single one of us - myself included - needs to think what they can do to help themselves. So, I went for a long walk on Saturday. That help enormously, being out in the fresh air and being able to see our beautiful, beautiful scenery and community here in Queensland.

REPORTER:

Minister Miles [inaudible]mum is 93. She had days to live in a Gold Coast nursing home. They're petrified of going into hotel quarantine where there might be COVID cases. Why haven't you allowed their [inaudible] to self-isolate in Queensland?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Was it Dan, was it? Welcome to our press conference. Good to have you here. As I've said, consistently, the others will let you know, as I've said consistently, I never have and never will address individual cases. Every one of these cases is complex. As we've learnt in recent days, the Prime Minister made a mistake talking about a couple of individual cases recently and was left with egg on his face when the facts of those cases came out. So, I'm not going to get into the detail of those cases. I know that the Chief Health Officer and her team go through them all very, very carefully, and wherever they can they are as compassionate as they possibly can be while also ensuring Queenslanders are kept safe.

REPORTER:

How does this [inaudible] having police outside [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It makes me feel sad, but none of us asked to be in these roles and to have to make the kinds of decisions that we've had to make. Those of you who've been here throughout will know how difficult those decisions have been sometimes, how heartbreaking they've been sometimes. But Dr Young has, I think, always done her best to make the right decisions for Queensland. That has [inaudible] in the results – sometimes those decisions have been hard – the results have had impacts on people, on individuals, on their families, but the result of those decisions, the cumulative result of those decisions is Queensland having been kept safe.

REPORTER:

How sustainable is it though...the ban in the A.C.T where there hasn't been any COVID detected at all in two months [inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look all of those factors are taken into account, we've said that at the end of each month we'll review cases in other states and therefore review our border rules – we have processes in place to allow people to visit dying relatives and loved ones. We have processes in place for people to get exemptions to come to Queensland for funerals. They are very similar arrangements that apply in South Australia, Tasmania, WA...I trust 7.30 has reporters at those press conferences today to ask the very same questions. I trust you're not just getting caught up in the LNP's attempt to make this a political issue in the lead up to the Queensland state election.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Of course I have. Every single day I think through all of the decisions that need to be made. Unfortunately, there's no rule book for this pandemic. It's a coronavirus pandemic so there isn't something we can just follow meticulously as we would normally. We had to right at the start re-write the rule book for pandemics to take into consideration this pandemic. And we're now eight months in, we're still learning every single day about this virus and we're looking at what it means for the processes we've put in place.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, we've seen [inaudible] with the election coming up do you fear your decisions will be [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

So the decisions I make are based purely on the health outcomes that we need to see. They're the same decisions no matter who would be around.

REPORTER:

Dr Young how are you going to manage the Opposition when we go into caretaker period. How does that work? [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

There are rules and processes for that so I'll follow them. I continually give briefings whenever requested to the Opposition – I'll continue to do that how often they request it.

REPORTER:

Would you work with an LNP government [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I'm a public servant, I'll always work for the government of the day.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...people might be wondering when those restrictions, the gatherings in outdoor areas are going to be lifted...do you any [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes when we've had no new cases for 14 days.

REPORTER:

No new cases at all?

DR YOUNG:

No new cases other than cases that are in quarantine which we know wouldn't spread – but no new cases that have been contracted outside of quarantine.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yeah...so community transmission of unlinked cases is the definition that I use for when I would recommend that the borders be opened. No, this would be...even if we had those cases linked, it would still worry me. So all of our cases related to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and the Queensland Corrective Training Academy have all been linked. We haven't had any unlinked cases. But having said that, we've had cases of concern.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well we've had two days of no cases.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...those people who are already in quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

Yes but as I said, I'm now worried about Goodna, Redbank Plains and Redbank so we would just have to see what happens.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Because we have had an individual who was out during a period and could've infected people...yes, in the last 14 days.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] national hot spot definition [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

So that's being discussed today at AHPPC and will go to National Cabinet later in the week.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

We haven't finished the discussion.

REPORTER:

Dr Young just on the health [inaudible] that you're using [inaudible]...any risks at all?

DR YOUNG:

No...no...the policy framework we're working under that has been agreed at National Cabinet is suppression. So, therefore we do allow people who are in quarantine to go out into the community wearing PPE to visit loved ones in hospital for instance, to actually go out. So if we had a no risk approach we wouldn't be doing that. And we would also be even tighter in terms of border restrictions and of our quarantine requirements. For instance, we are allowing people to quarantine in their home if they've been put in quarantine here in Queensland, so our latest clusters related to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, and the Arthur Gorrie and the other clusters are related so we're allowing those people to quarantine in their own home. We are not quarantining them in hotels. Although we are making assessments each time. Similarly, with our cases here in Queensland, not all cases are being treated in hospital. When we think that someone has got a home situation that can be managed we are enabling them to be treated in their home. So, all of those decisions would be totally different if we are going for a no risk approach.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes they are.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I think my colleagues are as well...I think this is a very difficult time for everyone because these are difficult decisions. I can understand why some people feel that they don't want to go through whatever is being asked because they don't fully understand, and that has been possibly a failing in getting that information out to people, and so people understand that this is not the flu. The flu makes you sick and then a small number unfortunately die, and often the little ones under the age of five and the elderly and other people with complex medical conditions. But, if you survive, you survive and you recover. That's not the case for this disease – we're seeing more and more people who get this infection don't fully recover. So that's the difference and I think that's what hasn't been understood broadly in the community. The other issue that I don't think has been broadly understood is that you can – and we are getting more and more information everyday – transmit this infection although totally well up to 72 hours we've now seen before you get any symptoms. So it's that person in the street that is totally, totally well...if you spend more than 15 minutes close by with them then you could end up getting infected. And we've seen that in New South Wales on public transport which is why I've put out that message of you can't socially distance it's time to wear a mask. And I notice today we've not got any people here with masks on but you're all socially distanced. The other day there were people with masks on – you came to the press conference so clearly people feel that our latest outbreak is under control – it's not. I hope it is but it's too early to say if it definitely is. We need to wait until we have seen that 14 days clear.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...comments that have been made online about you [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No I would never take legal action. No.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Sure.

REPORTER:

Postal voting opens today. [inaudible] postal vote?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah I understand applications for postal votes open today – of course the postal votes themselves won't be issued until after nominations have closed and ballots have been drawn in all of those seats. I would expect there would be more people early voting – in fact we hope that's the case as it will minimalise any kind of risk of coronavirus during the campaign. The Attorney-General I understand has spoken before about the range of initiatives being put in place but they include additional posting voting, extended pre-polling...the Northern Territory election which might be the best guide did see a very large increase in the number of pre-poll votes in particular.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]...the LNP candidate [inaudible] Cairns...what are you guys promising [inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah this is a pretty outrageous example of the LNP ignoring the medical advice and just doing what's best for them in their targeted marginal seats. We have an expert panel currently considering what is the best location for a transplant service in the north – the first transplant service outside of Brisbane – that was a decision we made and an announcement we made. However, we put clinicians and consumers in charge of determining the most appropriate location as a complex matter and there are a range of considerations. But the last thing a...the last thing a candidate for an election should be doing is saying they would over-ride that expert committee to pork barrel in a marginal seat. And that's effectively what the LNP are doing here. They've refused to take the health advice on so many matters related to COVID, and now they're saying they won't take the health advice about the best place to put a transplant service – a human organ is incredibly valuable. A human organ will save a life. And to think you might put that at risk to try and win a few votes in one seat is pretty disgusting.

REPORTER:

You're on the freeway [inaudible], does that come out of your electoral allowance and did you save a bit of money by doing three MP's on one billboard, is that right? And why is that appropriate to your electoral allowance for that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, that billboard is at the corner of the three of our electorates. We are and continue to talk to our communities about our plans to keep them safe from COVID and, of course, keep them in jobs, keep our economy open and all of us use our allowances entirely appropriately.

REPORTER:

Why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds? Isn't it basically [inaudible] so close to an election?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh no. the purpose of those allowances is to communicate with our communities and communicate with our communities about what we're doing. That's what we use our allowances for. It's entirely appropriate.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Once upon a time we use to buy Quest ads, but you guys stopped printing it.

REPORTER:

Last week, Mr Miles, there's a woman in her sixties in the border bubble south of the Tweed River. She's got a specialist in Brisbane who she sees [inaudible], she's already had surgery. [inaudible]. She's been told to fork out thousands to go to hotel quarantine. How reasonable is this situation?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well again, as I said, I'm not going to talk about individual cases. We have a dedicated team of clinicians who are available to people in other states who need to get health care here. We treat nearly 1000 people from New South Wales in our health facilities each and every day and I would urge you to provide the details of that hotline to your contact and we can facilitate her seeing her doctor. Thanks everyone.

[ENDS]

Type: Press conference

Speakers: Deputy Premier and Health Minister Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 18 September 2020

Duration: 15 minutes 49 seconds

E&OE

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it's another great day for Queensland. Really good news for Queensland – another day of no new cases of COVID-19, meaning our total number remains 1150. We have 25 that are active, and in the last testing period we did 5751 new tests. It is now eight days since we consider we had someone infectious in our community. Obviously, we would hope to continue to see no new cases or only new cases in quarantine up to that 14-day period at which time we can consider lifting restrictions. Of course, Queensland continues to sit in stark contrast with other parts of the world. You would have heard the tragic news overnight that the second wave in Europe has now surpassed the first and is yet to peak. 943,000 people have died due to this virus as the world inches closer to that million death mark. Again, in Victoria, while they continue to get their cases under control which we very much welcome and continue to assist them, they again saw more deaths in one 24-hour period than we have had from this disease in Queensland all year.

I'm really pleased to report that after a lot of work from our Chief Health Officer as well as detailed conversations between the Premier and the Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory and between our Government and the Canberra airport, we are announcing today that we will lift border restrictions on the ACT from 1am next Friday. That means that people from the ACT will again be able to visit Queensland. We have been saying for some time now that, for Queenslanders, Queensland is good to go. Well now for Canberrans, Queensland is good to come. So now is the time and we would urge them to start thinking about coming up to Queensland for a holiday. This is timed to coincide with the school holidays in the ACT. It's a great chance to come and visit friends and relatives, or go to the reef, go to Cairns, go to one of our wonderful tourism hotspots. This is great news for the ACT and of course is recognition for the fact that they have been some time now without any active cases. We are also confirming today that sewage testing in the Hervey Bay region has identified very low levels of viral fragments in the waste water there. The hospital and health service there will be taking necessary to ensure that there isn't any unidentified community transmission there. It's a bit like the Airlie Beach situation we outlined to you not long ago. There is no reason at all to panic. We are just letting people know that we have those results and that there may be some activity from the public health unit there.

DR YOUNG

Very good news, no new cases so we remain at 54 cases related to that cluster, that Melbourne-Logan cluster, the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre cluster, Arthur Gorrie, and the Corrective Services Academy and the Ipswich Hospital. So we have not had any case out in the community infectious in the last eight days which is really good, and we just wait to see what happens in the coming days. It is a little bit too early to totally relax so it is really important, more important than ever that if you have any symptoms to come forward and to get tested and to isolate yourself until you get that result. This is important across the whole state. As you heard from the Deputy Premier, we are testing sewage across the state now and we are picking up virus every so often. We're not sure at this point in time what that really means, but we are taking, of course, a very cautious approach to that and wherever we are finding virus we are asking people to come out and get tested so that we make sure we do not have community transmission in that community. We know you can shed virus for a long, long time but we do not want to ignore the fact that perhaps, maybe, that virus is there in the sewage due to a recent infection. So that is why we're doing this, just to be very careful. It is really important that across the state people continue to come forward and get tested. If we can find the first case in a cluster, we can clamp down on it very, very quickly and not end up in a large outbreak.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, at this stage it is still 28 days. That of course is the safest because then if you do miss one transmission cycle, you then would be more likely to pick it up the next. So it is just being really careful. You might remember, we had that gap between the initial cluster from those three young women who went to Melbourne and then opened up and we got a second cluster. And now it is pretty certain they are related. So it is all about the risk of having a cluster that you don't pick up.

REPORTER:

Are you convinced there is no longer a threat of people driving from Sydney to Canberra and flying in?

DR YOUNG:

I am convinced that that's been sorted because of the work that has been done between Queensland and the ACT. So anyone who goes from NSW to Canberra will need to wait for 14 days before they can come to Queensland.

REPORTER:

So you mean they will have to quarantine in Canberra for 14 days before they can come here?

DR YOUNG:

Well not quarantine because Canberra doesn't have that in place, but they will have to stay in the ACT for 14 days. People can come to Queensland today as long as they have not been in a declared hotspot in the previous 14 days. So people can come from the ACT as long as they

haven't been in a declared hotspot, which is currently NSW and Victoria, in the previous 14 days.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, is [inaudible] a symptom for coronavirus and should the Premier have been tested earlier?

DR YOUNG:

No, loss of voice is not a symptom of coronavirus and we, every single day that we need at AHPPC, we discuss whether symptoms should be added to the list. So most recently we added diarrhea, vomiting and nausea to that list, we've also recently added a runny nose. But no, loss of voice is not a symptom. No.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No. No. But she was ultra-cautious and that is what I ask of every Queenslander. She was ultra-cautious... although there was no need for her to do it, she went and got herself tested.

REPORTER:

So Queenslanders who lose their voice, they don't need to go and get tested?

DR YOUNG:

No, but I would encourage them to, as the premier did; that, if you have a symptom, it is a good idea to go and get tested rather than think through, is it COVID, isn't it COVID. Just get yourself tested. What we don't need though is perfectly well people to get tested. We still are testing a lot of perfectly well people because they are unsure, and it is fine and we do that, but there is no need for it. It is really important that people have symptoms get themselves tested.

REPORTER:

With the ACT, does that mean [inaudible], does that mean that it won't be a hotspot anymore?

DR YOUNG:

That's correct.

REPORTER:

Okay. So how are you going to guarantee [inaudible]... how is it going to be guaranteed that people coming in haven't been to a hotspot? Are they going to have to do declarations, [inaudible]...?

DR YOUNG:

Yep. Exactly the same as Western Australia, Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania – it's exactly the same. They will have to then declare that haven't been in a hotspot in the last

14 days, and they will have to fly in. They can't drive. Because if they drive, they will be driving through a hotspot.

REPORTER:

Is that just relying on people's honesty though? Are you concerned people could still slip through?

DR YOUNG:

We have always been concerned about that but our police have done an absolutely brilliant job at working that through and managing that. And yes, we do depend, but we depend on our lives every single day for people to be honest.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] aged care homes [inaudible] the aged care homes down around the south east. Are aged care homes being told to prepare to be able to reopen, and have they been asked to get other measures in place like [inaudible] and get PPE changes to get ready for that change?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Our aged care facilities across the whole of Queensland have done an enormous amount of work to make their facilities safe as they possibly can for the residents, and enabled those very important visits to occur. So I am hopeful, as we have lifted those restrictions for the Darling Downs and Gold Coast, that if we have no more cases out in the community over the next week that we will be able to lift those restrictions for Brisbane metropolitan area and for Ipswich.

REPORTER:

Dr Young – the Blackwater response. Can you explain why [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, so as soon as we had those results we explained them. So the issue with that one – it was a very complex situation. So we got a positive result in the middle of the night, and because I struggled with understanding where that person might have got the infection, I immediately asked for a second result to be done. But unfortunately, I couldn't rely on that second result because it was contaminated with blood. So they couldn't do the test. Now, then I was stuck with a positive result and a result I couldn't rely on, so of course I took the cautious view to treat it as a positive and we went ahead and worked with the town. The town were brilliant. They came forward, they got tested. The people who had been in close contact with the gentleman went into quarantine, and that all got managed. Then the coroner did a whole range of additional tests which was possible for the coroner to do because he had that deceased body so he could do further tests. But those tests were done quite late. And we don't have that clarification about what those tests mean. But once we got all of those tests, we then went out and although those people hadn't finished their 14-day quarantine period, we enabled them to leave quarantine.

REPORTER:

What we saw though, which you would have seen last night, is Thursday night, Friday night with the serology tests. You got those results from a coroner [inaudible]. It wasn't announced until Monday night that it was announce that [inaudible]. That was a long time to have [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

It was, but I needed more tests. So I needed...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes there were so that we could work through it because the risk, as we have seen, one case could lead to a significant outbreak. The best thing to do for that town was to manage it as a positive case. And that is what we do all the time. So all the time, when we get a positive case, until we have definitive advice – and we actually never got that – until we have definitive advice we treat that as positive.

REPORTER:

What is the benchmark then. How many negative results do you need over that weekend, for Friday, for Thursday? When do you decide, okay that negative result [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It was a whole accumulation of things. And in fact...

REPORTER:

Is there a number?

DR YOUNG:

No, there is no number. In fact, what was actually more important for me was the amount of testing we did in that town and we didn't find another case. That was more important because you have got to remember, we were doing these tests on someone who had died. That is a really difficult situation. We don't have the validation for those sorts of tests. Our tests all go through a TGA approval process, and we don't have that for people who have died. We don't know what it means when someone dies and the virus starts to decompose. And is that the reason why it is negative? There are just so many very, very complicated issues that we have to deal with, but I know the facts. I know that one case can lead to an enormous consequence for that community. So you can imagine, there I've got a positive result that was done on a piece of equipment that we trust saying that it was positive. And that was the test that was done the quickest after the gentleman died, so that is the one I put most weight on. It took a lot of other negatives before I was confident enough to say I'll ignore that positive.

REPORTER:

Minister, [inaudible]. You said that yesterday that every day, your opening quote, every day you gave the updated information. That's the first time we've heard that information. Why couldn't that information be relayed to the family.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I did provide information every day throughout that time.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So there was a series of tests, but the right decision was made and that was to act on the basis of one positive test. The ramification here, the ramification here is that some people got tested who maybe did not need to. Compare that to the ramification of discounting a positive test, which could have been an outbreak in a small town. And so I will stand by that the decision that the Chief Health Officer made, the decisions that were made throughout that weekend, and stand by the communications that we gave to the community.

REPORTER:

Is Queensland planning to accept another 500 international visitors? And what would the cost be to Queensland of that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, those discussions are underway at the moment and I'm sure there will be more to report on this afternoon, but the point I made yesterday was that it is the Federal Government's responsibility to take care of Australians while they are overseas and so they should act to get them home, and they should meet the costs of hotel quarantine. I have never understood, never understood why the Federal Government have been able to abrogate their responsibility and force states to do quarantine for international arrivals when that very clearly should be the Commonwealth's responsibility.

REPORTER:

Are you aware of the [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I understand there will be more information about that later in the day. I don't want to comment until more information [inaudible].

REPORTER:

Just on the border, Gladys Berejiklian said yesterday that there is no conversations ongoing at all with New South Wales and Queensland. Has that relationship broken down totally?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'm not going to comment on those personal relationships. I do know that Jeannette, our Chief Health Officer, speaks with the New South Wales Officer pretty much every day. I

speaking with the New South Wales Health Minister most days as well. So there is good and strong ongoing collaboration between the two states, as there needs to be. We share a highly populated border.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'm not going to comment on those relationships. Thank you so much.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Type: Press conference

Speakers: Deputy Premier and Health Minister Steven Miles, Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young and Deputy Commissioner Steve Gollschewski

Date: 21 September 2020

Duration: 19 minutes 25 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

... we now have 17 active cases. The total number of cases we've had in Queensland so far is 1153. Of those 17 active cases, 11 are in West Moreton and three are in Metro South, so as you can see, while the numbers continue to go down, they are clustered in the southern suburbs and around Ipswich. The number of tests in the last testing period was 2708, well below the level that we'd like to be testing at. And so our other message for today is that for any reason you think you may have symptoms of COVID-19, please do and get tested, especially if you are in the Ipswich region or the southern suburbs of Brisbane. We have the Chief Health Officer and the Deputy Commissioner available also.

DR YOUNG:

So, good news again for Queensland, that one new case that was found in someone in hotel quarantine, and quarantine has stood us very, very well as we've been managing not only quarantine of people from overseas, but also immediate quarantine when we've been contact tracing. And I thank every single person who has agreed to go into quarantine and has managed it so well. We've not seen a lot of testing over the weekend which is understandable given that, hopefully, we're coming to the end of this current cluster. But I do emphasise it is really, really important, if you've got any symptoms to come forward and get tested and isolate yourself until you get that result. It is that work that will keep all Queenslanders safe as we go forward. Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

If I could just give you a quick update on our current phase of operations since August the 8th, which is phase six for us in terms of the border controls and quarantining that we're doing in Queensland. We've currently met 2792 flights, checked 122,507 passengers – domestic passengers that is – and have refused entry to 207 people. In terms of our roads, we have checked 155,921 vehicles and turned 6127 persons. We currently have 3938 people in hotel quarantine in Queensland and overall our system is operating as we would expect. The figures that you hear talked about today and the numbers of infections in this state are testament to the work that has been done by our community and our agencies to make sure that we contain the virus in Queensland. I have to say that our quarantining has been the number one thing that has made the difference for this state. I am sure the Chief Health Officer would agree, because she just mentioned that to me before the media. Thank you to all the hotels that are working with us to do that. It is incredibly challenging for us. Our planning is very detailed and we are continuing to work with those hotels to make sure that we have sufficient

quarantining here in Queensland. Unfortunately over the weekend we did see eight fines issued, and I just want to raise that. We saw 662 licensed premises checked across the state, but we had to issue two penalty infringement notices here in Brisbane, one at Sunnybank and one in the Valley. And what was disappointing is that both of these licensed premises had previously been warned about one, not keeping registers, the others around people not socially distancing in the numbers that were in there. They chose not to take that warning that was given to them formally through Police and the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation and they have now been fined. The other ones – and it is a message for those people that do have exemptions or are allowed into this state or are quarantining in accordance with those exemptions that they must abide by them – the other six penalty infringement notices were all individuals that did not comply with their exemption requirements, and that was right across the state, so Townsville, south east corner and elsewhere. But overall I have to say that we are in very good shape because of the work that has been done by the community at large, and we'd like to thank the community for its ongoing efforts, and just remind everyone it is not the time to be complacent. We are really in a good position and we want to keep going that way. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

It is a karaoke bar.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

A hotel. Yes. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, it is not that. So tonight, Stadiums have agreed to trial increasing the density for a small number of people at the Gabba stadium. So at the moment people are attending at a 50 per cent density – so around half the normal numbers – now the plan for the Grand Final, if everything goes well between now and then, is to increase that capacity to 75 per cent. So they just want to test that process with 200 people who've agreed to be part of that trial. So to test the enhanced measures, so using of masks and how people remain in the seats, how all that is managed. So instead of having one in two seats vacant, there will be one in four seats vacant. And just to work that through a small number. Because to suddenly go and increase from 50 per cent to 75 per cent without having trialled all those processes, makes it a bit difficult. Now we know that outdoor events are much, much safer than indoor events. We also know that the stadiums are really good because everyone has a seat and people are asked, and do, stay in that seat. So were there to be a case – which I think is very unlikely given where we are at the moment with our most recent cluster – if there were to be a case, it would be very easy to contact trace. And if you remember, we do this all the time for planes. We contact trace two rows in front, two behind, two either side, so we'd be able to do this here and this is actually much safer than a plane because it is outdoors. So, it is a really good thing to just test the processes rather than do it for the first time with a full stadium.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Right from the start, I have said where we've got COVID Safe Plans, we should use them. Now we don't have COVID Safe Plans for people's own homes, of course we don't, people will in their own home manage themselves as much as they feel comfortable. But we can't go and dictate what people do in their own homes, other than the size of the gatherings, so that is why that is in place. Outside people's homes – and you've heard the Deputy Police Commissioner about it – outside the homes people have COVID Safe Plans and we have compliance strategies in place to ensure that people manage those COVID Safe Plans. And this is the same for our stadiums across the state, they all have COVID Safe Plans and they have compliance processes in place for those plans.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes, 30,000 is 75 per cent of the Gabba. So each stadium has different numbers, but for the Gabba, that is their 75 per cent.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

There is, that is why I really want those groups minimised to 10, or now at the Gold Coast, of course, we removed their additional restrictions last week, so they can now have up to 30 people in a group. But it is because people do relax and let down their guard and that is why we need to have those gathering limits.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Thanks Lane. I am not familiar with that, haven't seen it yet, but it won't matter whether it is Eddie Maguire or anyone else. If they have breached any of the conditions that are set by the Chief Health Officer's directions, we will take action. So, we'd have to have a look at that and see if there is an issue or not, or whether it is something for the AFL or whether it is simply nothing. I am not familiar, thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

At this point in time, that is a rule for Queensland, that is what we have been using right from the start.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

But our cases are quite different. So, for a start, any case that is in hotel quarantine from overseas, I immediately discount, as does New South Wales, and because they have more people in hotel quarantine, from overseas at the moment, they always have more cases. So that doesn't count. Then anyone who is quarantine at the time that they are picked up, I don't count, so that happens here in Queensland. So, we've had a few cases in the last few days of people related to our most recent cluster, but they've been in quarantine. That shows the success of contact tracing and finding people, and then they're picked up while they're in quarantine, so they haven't been out and about while infections so those don't count. So, New South Wales has had some cases where they are picking people up who weren't in quarantine at the time that they were picked up. So that is the concern. So cases vary enormously in terms of their risk to the community, and every single case, and I know the Chief Health Officer in New South Wales does this, as does the Chief Health Officer in Victoria, and I do that because we are the three states at the moment that really have the cases. We look at every single case as an individual case and work out what the risk of that individual case is to the community and to ongoing spread.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, at this point in time the discussions we've held – although it hasn't been confirmed by National Cabinet so it's only currently health advice that we've talked about between ourselves – is that the safest metric to use is that 28 days of no community transmission.

REPORTER:

And Dr Young, [inaudible] that 28 days [inaudible]. On that basis, why did you let the border reopen to New South Wales at the beginning of July? Had there been [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

They weren't community transmission. That is the complicated factor...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

But they were enclosed, so they were under control. So it's when you've got community transmission...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No. The Chief Health Officer there was quite comfortable with what was happening. I was quite comfortable with what was happening. So that's what I mean. We make decisions based on every single case and what the ongoing risk to the community is from that case. And every

case we treat here in Australia because we have the ability to do so because we have such small numbers – every single case is looked at on its merits.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, doesn't the ACT [inaudible], the Premier approach you and ask you if it was safe to reopen the border or did you tell the Premier?

DR YOUNG:

I spoke with the Premier as I do on a very regular occasion and we talked through these issues very regularly.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Well, it met my criteria for what was safe. The problem with ACT that made it so complicated and so difficult is that ACT is actually a bit of land within New South Wales...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, no. I've been talking to the Premier for quite a while...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes, I would say it was my discussion with the Premier. Yes.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] you mentioned that New South Wales is doing really well with their cases, is there a chance that [inaudible] at the end of the month [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well I'm not going to get into the detail of that, and the Chief Health Officer has outlined how she'll be monitoring each and every case to determine their relative risk and then looking for that 28-day period. But I stand by what I said, though. New South Wales and Victoria have done incredibly well. Victoria has gone from reporting 700 cases a day to being around the 40 cases a day mark. That's greater progress than certainly I expected that they would make. Similarly, New South Wales seems to be getting on top of their cases, although they still have some where there is reason to be concerned that people have been infectious in the community.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We'd certainly urge Cairns hotels to consider whether they could assist us with hotel quarantine. We've got a team from Queensland Health who will be seeking expressions of interest from hotels. We know that Cairns has both an international airport as well as is suffering significantly from the closed international borders, and so if that's a way for us to inject economic activity, create jobs in Cairns then we'd certainly like to do that. There are complications and clearly we need to work through those, but if there are hotels in Cairns that right now would like to participate in our hotel quarantine program, we'd urge them to come forward.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

There's certainly other regional locations that could assist. Gladstone is one of them. Gladstone has an airport, not an international airport but an airport, so we will be looking at all of those options and where we can use the hotel quarantine program to support jobs in regional locations, we certainly will.

REPORTER:

What day are we up to on opening aged care [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look I understand Jeannette will consider that during the week. Thursday would be 14 days after the last case thought to be infectious in the community, and so that's an appropriate review point.

REPORTER:

Do you have any info on any cases in the last week or two weeks that have been from community transmission in New South Wales [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That's the kind of detail we could probably get for you, Lydia, but I'm happy for Jeannette to talk to it in general terms if you like.

DR YOUNG:

I think you'd be better off getting that directly from New South Wales. Their most recent case that may be of concern is that they had a taxi driver out and about in the community over the last week or so. So that was notified yesterday.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible] capacity, is that something that will be possible [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

The only problem with indoors is that we know that is a high risk of transmission. So the CDC in America came out with some data that was particularly compelling that nearly half of their cases have been acquired through restaurants and cafes. So we know that indoors just is a problem. Outdoors is much, much safer. And Queensland, we have a beautiful outdoor environment, so we should wherever possible think about using outdoors.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, the Northern Territory [inaudible] dancing outdoors because cases have been so low, when will we be able to start dancing?

DR YOUNG:

Dancing is difficult because no matter how you manage it you don't socially distance when you dance, and we know that is a high risk. So I just think we need to, methodically, as we've been now since January, we just need to manage this so we go forward so we don't get transmission.

REPORTER:

Last night, the Treasurer told ABC that there were no [inaudible] in relation to [inaudible], how do you not have modelling now to open to New South Wales [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

What we consider when we consider opening borders is the risk of transmission in the places that we're opening borders to. That is the primary consideration. That's what the consideration was made last week with regards to the ACT, and it's the matter that will be monitored in an ongoing way with regards to New South Wales.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The Deputy Commissioner will know the number of hotels. We had more than 4000 people in hotel quarantine in the last 24 hours.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Just bear with me one moment, I'll give you the exact number. So as I said we currently have 3932 people in quarantine, and the numbers of hotels... can I give you that afterward? I have to add them up, they haven't given me a total. So we do have that number but. Thank you.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank you.

[ENDS]



Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young and Deputy Police Commissioner Steve Gollschewski

Date: 22 September 2020

Duration: 23 minutes approx.

E&OE

PREMIER:

So can I start off today by saying great news for Queensland, zero new cases. That means our active cases are 16, and the total number of tests conducted in the past 24 hours is 4898. Today I can also announce that we have been closely looking at the border zones between Queensland and New South Wales, and I can advise that from 1.00am on the 1st of October, the following shires will be added to the border zone. They are the Byron Shire, Ballina, the city of Lismore, Richmond Valley, which involves Casino and Evans Head, and Glen Innes. So that means there will be 41 more postcodes added in and these postcodes are in the 11 local government areas that sit along the Queensland-New South Wales border, plus the five new ones that I just listed. So they will come in at 1.00am on the 1st of October. So residents will be able to apply for a border pass and then they will be able to freely travel around Queensland and Queenslanders will also be able to travel there as well. I think this is a great effort to consider how we can make our border zones more effective but also too looking at these areas have a lot in common with Queensland, they usually do a lot of their business in Queensland, so we believe that this is the right measure to take and we have also been in contact with the New South Wales authorities to advise them of this today as well. Can I also just mention to everyone as well, some shocking news out of the UK about a proposed second wave there where the Chief Medical Officer addressed people to say that if they don't do something rapidly they could see an increase of up to 50,000 cases a day by next month. We don't want to see that in Queensland and I thank Queenslanders for doing the right thing. So what's happening overseas is very alarming. It is very concerning. Of course, that's why we're trying to get Australians home and working with the Federal Government as quickly as possible. I'll hand over to the Deputy Premier.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank you Premier. That zero number of cases overnight, no cases overnight, brings us to 12 days since we last had somebody thought to be infectious in the Queensland community. We are now just at 16 active cases of COVID-19 and we are pleased to see that testing rate back closer to our 5000 target. We have very consistently said throughout this pandemic that we would review our border settings towards the end of each month and make adjustments as appropriate based on the situation both here in Queensland and in other states. And so that review for this month has said that we can safely shift the border zone, bring more people

into the Queensland border zone. There is roughly 152,000 people who live in the five local government areas being added to the border zone. These are people who might live in New South Wales but very often they feel a closer affinity to Queensland. They live closer to Queensland than they do to Sydney. Many of us see these places like Byron and Ballina as local places and this means that we will be able to travel there. Residents from there will be able to travel here relatively freely for healthcare, for work, to visit family and/or friends. These changes will come into effect at 1.00am on Thursday, the 1st of October as our border changes have generally done throughout the pandemic. This is in addition to the adjustments made to de-list the ACT as a hotspot. That will come into effect at 1.00am this coming Friday and if we have two further days of no community transmission, that will bring us to 14 days since that last case was thought to be infectious in the community and that's the point at which the Chief Health Officer will be able to consider those restrictions that still apply throughout the Brisbane metropolitan and West Moreton hospital and health service districts. This is all as a result of the fantastic work of Queenslanders as well as the very low number of cases in northern New South Wales meaning that we can safely make these adjustments. That's in stark contrast to what's happening in the rest of the world. As the Premier said, we are very concerned about the situation in United Kingdom, very concerned about the number of new cases across Europe and what that means for the number of deaths there. They are currently projecting up to 200 deaths a day in the UK if this second wave continues as it is currently projected, and sadly that means that our international borders are likely to need to stay closed for the foreseeable future.

DR YOUNG:

So excellent news – no new cases in Queensland overnight, and if that continues for the next two days, so that we don't have any community acquired cases, we'll be able to remove those remaining restrictions that are in place for Brisbane and Ipswich. So hopefully that will happen on Friday as we go into the weekend and people will again be able to gather in those groups of 30. So we've seen a really good response out there in terms of testing. It's important that although we're not seeing cases, that we need to be alert. So please, everyone, if you have any symptoms at all, come forward and get tested and isolate yourself until you get a result. And that way we will continue to find cases at the start of an outbreak, at the start of a cluster and be able to get onto them very quickly to minimise the impact on everyone. Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Morning. In our last 24 hours we've seen 66 flights met in Queensland, 4451 passengers have been processed, we refused entry to two. We intercepted 3239 vehicles at our road borders and we turned around and refused entry to 100 persons. We currently have 3852 persons in hotel quarantine across the state. And I can say, regrettably, as I mentioned yesterday, people are still in some instances doing the wrong thing. In the last 24 hours we've had two penalty infringement notices. One for a noisy party at Rochedale in an Airbnb where police attended and there was too many people in attendance there, and also one for a person deliberately lying on his border declaration pass coming out of New South Wales who was both turned around and issued with a \$4000 dollar fine. And also a person intercepted in Townsville who did not cooperate with police, but clearly had come out of Victoria, had been residing there

for the past 12 months. We don't know how that person got into the state. He's not cooperating, but he's been issued with a notice to appear before Townsville court into the future. So they are the issues at the moment for the police. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] can I ask you what was the main advice for those border areas to now... to the point where it is safe for them to be included?

DR YOUNG:

So we've not seen any cases along those border areas for quite some time. And we've also not seen cases north of Sydney for quite a while, so it is safe to open up those areas. We know that people who live along that border actually have a lot more to do with Queensland than they do New South Wales, and we know the difficulties it's caused those communities. So seeing that it's now safe to do that, we are releasing those restrictions to extend that border just a bit further south. The other thing is that we're all gaining more experience around the country with looking at sewage, and that's been a very, very useful strategy. We're doing it more and more here in Queensland, New South Wales has been doing it, and that gives us a heads-up because we can't test everyone in the community, but we can test the sewage which then gives us an idea of what's going on in that community. And it tells us that there is virus or there isn't virus. It doesn't tell us how much, so it's not useful where you know you've got cases, but where you believe you don't have any cases it then gives you that information. So we're just using the technology that's at our disposal. We are now eight months in so we're learning a lot more about this virus, we're learning how we can manage it and we're learning how we can live with it. You would have seen that our response to this second cluster here in Queensland was very different response to that first cluster because we had all of those COVID Safe Plans, and I think they've worked exceptionally well – far better than I thought they would. They really have meant that we could continue our lives in Queensland much as we would normally. Remember the first time, we all got locked in our homes, except for those four reasons we couldn't leave. We didn't need to do that this time because we've worked out more about the virus and Queenslanders have worked out how to live safely with it, and I think that's been proven in this latest cluster. So we've seen 55 cases from that latest cluster, those various parts of that cluster, and now we've not seen a case infectious in the community since the 10th of September, which is really good.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is that to allow them to travel whenever, how many times to and from Queensland and New South Wales.

DR YOUNG:

Yes, it does. And anywhere within Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] will you allow [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Right, so they haven't had any community transmission cases since the 8th of September. We're still looking at this most recent case with the taxi driver just to see what happens there. So we know from New South Wales where he acquired it, but we just need to find out whether he, while he was in the community, spread.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

Do you think we're going to [inaudible] where large parts of New South Wales [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We'll just have to wait and see. So those decisions are made at the end of each month about what's happening. We're not 28 days free yet so we'll have to just wait for that 28 days.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] open the borders [inaudible] do it together, or?

DR YOUNG:

So at this point in time, as you heard from the Deputy Premier, in Queensland we review the borders at the end of every month.

REPORTER:

So there'll be a decision on September 30 [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, you mentioned before [inaudible] for that greater Sydney area for quite some time. So are you just going to rely on people to be honest with their border declarations [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That's what we do do. So that's our border zone and we've looked at the areas where people have that closer relationship with Queensland than they have with New South Wales. So all of New South Wales is currently a hotspot, and that will be reviewed at the end of each month as we've been doing. This is not about hotspots, this about the border zone and looking at where people have that closer relationship with Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That's a decision made at the end of each month. So we've made that decision for the end of this month, and then we'll make those decisions in future months.

REPORTER:

South Australia open [inaudible] New South Wales [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No. Our decision has always been that we need to see that 28 days without any community acquired cases. That is the safest process to follow.

REPORTER:

Sorry, just to be clear, Dr Young, you're saying you have this decision today for this month. Are you saying that there would be no other change in your advice for this month? Like, would [inaudible] for the rest of New South Wales?

DR YOUNG:

That is usually what happens, remembering that things can change of course. Nothing, with this virus, is ever locked in absolute stone because we're still learning things. But yes, that is our current process – at the end of each month the border situation is reviewed.

REPORTER:

The reason I'm asking though is I think people would probably be expecting that at the end of this month, which is still a few days away, there might be another decision. You're saying that that's probably not the situation?

DR YOUNG:

Probably not.

REPORTER:

Okay. And there is a case in the news today as well of a guy from Toowoomba who had brain surgery interstate. Dr Charlie Teo recommended he have his rehabilitation at home. That request was knocked back by the exemptions' unit. Can you give me an understanding of why somebody like that wouldn't be allowed to do that quarantine at home?

DR YOUNG:

Yep. So we now have a medi-hotel, which essentially is a hospital in a hotel. So any cases like that are being quarantined in that medi-hotel where they will receive a lot more care than they would if they were at home. So it will actually be better care for him.

REPORTER:

Which hotel is it?

DR YOUNG:

Rydges at South Bank.

REPORTER:

And Dr Young, can you just explain how you [inaudible] since September 8, why [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So, community transmission when it's unlinked. So you don't know the source of that transmission, that's always been the definition for that 28 days.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] exemptions case, a family from Newcastle is trying to plan a funeral for grandparents who died in a car crash in Townsville. Why can't they come up?

DR YOUNG:

Of course they can come up. They then would need to do 14 days quarantine before the funeral. These are really difficult times for people, and that's the process in place.

REPORTER:

And on the AFL fan test last night, what was your early thoughts on it? Are you going to have to reduce the capacity?

DR YOUNG:

I'm told it went really, really well. So I'll get a formal report about it, but I understand from the early information that it was a very successful trial.

REPORTER:

Any problems?

DR YOUNG:

No.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, sorry, just on that Toowoomba man again. Are you satisfied with the time that it's taken you for exemptions to be decided upon? This man has put in an exemption a month before he went for surgery, went in for surgery and still didn't have an answer. Is that an adequate timeframe?

DR YOUNG:

It is really, really difficult. We are getting enormous numbers of exemptions and I recognise for every single person they desperately want to know the answer. There is now a hotline that they can ring, 7am to 7pm, seven days a week, so if they don't get a response after they've put in that exemption request through the online process, then they should ring that hotline. That's why it's been stood up.

REPORTER:

And just back to the changes you've made to the border bubble, they can go anywhere in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

That's correct. They can go anywhere, yes.

REPORTER:

Premier, the [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

As I said, every state does it. The Federal Government has done its research, that's come into National Cabinet. You know, it's...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Well if every other state does, yes we will. But every other state has done it and so has the Federal Government.

REPORTER:

Premier, the Auditor-General's doing a [inaudible] on your Government's handling of the COVID response, how would you judge it?

PREMIER:

Well that's up to Queensland to judge. But I hope Queenslanders see that we have responded quickly, we've got on top of cases, and in both times where we've had those cluster outbreaks, Queenslanders have responded.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] business grants seem to take a while to get out, [inaudible] would you ask for a bit of understanding on their part?

PREMIER:

I haven't seen the report, Patrick. I'm happy to look at it. I haven't seen it.

REPORTER:

On the border, [inaudible] indicated that there mightn't be a decision about the border with New South Wales until October, is that your understanding? What would you say to Queenslanders who might have been expecting that decision about the whole of New South Wales?

PREMIER:

Yeah, well we said that we make decisions at the end of the month. We've looked at these border zones. This is not dissimilar to what's happening on the Victoria and South Australia border where they actually have border zones as well. So look, we've acted on the best advice and I'm quite sure that that's going to make it a lot easier for people to travel to and from Queensland. At the end of the month we will also be looking at any other restrictions that we can ease across Queensland. We are working through those at the moment. You can consider that a stage four. But we are working through that with business and community as well.

REPORTER:

What other restrictions are there, Premier?

PREMIER:

Well, you'll know at the end of the month, Lane.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Lydia, I'd love to answer that question for you in a more positive light.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] how many people in a restaurant or a bar or...?

PREMIER:

We're working with business. So can I just have those discussions with business first and then we'll let you know at the end of the month.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yeah.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] public health directions around the borders...

PREMIER:

Yes.

REPORTER:

...so why are we [inaudible] the end of the month [inaudible] make any decisions?

PREMIER:

Well what happens is we sit down and we discuss it at the end of the month in terms of the advice that Dr Young presents to Government. So, I mean, it's pretty standard about what happens in every other state and territory.

REPORTER:

Are you considering this Katter Party proposal to increase water [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes, they came to meet with us and we're looking into it.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] in your position announced [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well that sounds like the beginning of cuts. This is exactly how the LNP started when they got elected. There were huge cuts to organisations and I think you can remember, Queenslanders can remember going back to that time nearly every single day we were dealing with cuts to organisations, breast screen, community organisations, neighbourhood centres. This just sounds like the beginning of what the LNP do.

REPORTER:

Premier, the death in the watchhouse late week sparked a lot of rage about [inaudible]. Would you [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes, I do ask Queenslanders for calm during this. And I've just had a briefing from the Commissioner of Police because I wanted to be fully aware of the processes that now take place. So, first of all, our condolences to the family of Aunty Sherry, and then what now happens is there is a coronial investigation, and then there is a full investigation which is a review done by Ethical Standards which has CCC oversight. The Commissioner has assured me that she is taking swift action in relation to this matter, and both of those will run in tandem together – so that's the coronial investigation and the full Ethical Standards review with CCC oversight of that full detailed investigation.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] thousand dollars on tourism throughout [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

I think what we're seeing in Queensland is Queenslanders are getting out there and supporting Queenslanders, in business, in tourism. We got the school holidays at the moment. I know my family is booked to go over to North Stradbroke Island, I know other families are booking to go up north. And this is a good time to get out and about. I mean, Queensland, look at today's weather – I think summer has approached.

REPORTER:

So you don't think [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Of course we are always looking at more ways we can help the industry. That's why we've got those \$200 million dollars of grants, and of course we want to see Queenslanders supporting Queenslanders, and that's exactly what they're doing. Our Good to Go campaign is working.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

I don't think we need to do that at the moment, no.

REPORTER:

I've just a question for the Deputy Premier. [inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well I'm going to be genuinely torn I've got to say. I'd love to see a new NRL team at Redcliffe, it's just up the road from my house at Mango Hill. I don't know what I'll do with my 15-year season membership at the Broncos. Maybe if they can put together a better performance next year I'll be able to stick with them and make Redcliffe my second team. But certainly, I'd love to see a team playing out of Redcliffe. The Dolphins are a fantastic outfit.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well the Government has already contributed to build the stadium that would see the Dolphins play at Redcliffe. And so, that's how we've been supporting them and they are... it's a fantastic stadium. It's a great place to watch footy. Thanks.

[ENDS]



Released under RTI - DPC

Type: Press conference

Speakers: Deputy Premier and Health Minister Steven Miles and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 24 September 2020

Duration: 21 minutes 30 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Another zero day for Queensland – no new cases of COVID-19 cases, putting us further into that incredible [inaudible] of 14 days now since the last time we thought we had an infectious case in the Queensland community, meaning that those additional restrictions currently in place in the Brisbane metropolitan and West Moreton areas can now be lifted. They will be lifts as of 1am tomorrow, that coincides with the lifting of the ACT as a hotspot. That will allow for visitors again into aged care facilities in those areas, it will allow for the lifting of some of the visitor restrictions in hospitals in those areas as well as allowing gatherings limits to increase from 10 to 30 so people can go ahead and organise that house party for Friday night. There has been some conjecture this morning from the Federal Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, claiming that Queensland did not ask for ongoing assistance from the army on our borders. And so I would like to distribute for you correspondence. Correspondence between the Police Commissioner on the 21st - sorry, the Deputy Commissioner, the State Disaster Coordinator, where he asked explicitly to the Lieutenant General to ensure adequate resources and time to sustainably meet this demand, we are seeking ADF support to continue at our borders until the 19th of October. Then, you will see the army wrote back to us to say ADF's support to Queensland border operations will conclude on the 30th of September as previously advised. I have also now provided to you a letter from the Premier subsequently sent to the Prime Minister making it very, very clear that we would support the army's ongoing support on our borders. This is yet another example of a federal government minister being sent out by the Prime Minister to attack our government in the local media, here in Queensland, being caught out lying. And I think it is time, again, for Josh Frydenberg to apologise for the statements that he made this morning. It is time for the federal government to stop using the Australian Defence Force, which after all is for all Australians, to stop using them as a bargaining chip in their war against our COVID-19 restrictions. I understand there has been some discussion in the central Queensland community about the possibility that they will host hotel quarantine travellers returning from overseas. I can confirm that there was consideration of the use of under-utilised FIFO work camps in that region, that consideration has now been concluded and we won't be progressing with that option. I would also like to, if you would indulge me just for a moment, acknowledge that Queensland and particularly Queensland Labor lost a giant overnight. Peter Simpson was a legend and a friend, and we are all grieving and our thoughts are with Penny and his family and the wider ETU family. Thank you.

DR YOUNG:

So no new cases in Queensland overnight which is excellent. It has now been 14 days since we've had someone who was infectious out in our community. That means all of those restrictions that we've put in place for Brisbane and Ipswich can now be removed. That will happen 1am tomorrow. So people

can return to aged care, to disability accommodation services, to hospitals to visit their relatives and friends, and also those increased requirements for PPE in our hospital and aged care services are no longer needed, they kept us safe during that period, plus people can increase gathering size back to 30 as exists for the rest of the state. This has been a really good outcome, so we've now had 55 cases related to those clusters and there has been an amazing response from Queenslanders. Our COVID Safe Plans, I think, were really tested and they came forward and they showed that they work, and that is really reassuring because as we go forward we know we can't eliminate this virus from Queensland, no matter how successful we are at our borders, there is always that ongoing risk. So we need to be ready if we do have another incursion into Queensland, we now know that we can manage those incursions through our processes in our hospital and health services, with contact tracing and through testing. Testing is so important, it was great to see in the last 24 hours more than 5000 Queenslanders got tested. That is where I want to see our numbers sitting at because that gives us a good idea across the state of potentially what is happening. It is really important that as we go forward, we do those things. So, if any of us are sick, stay home, isolate ourselves and get tested immediately, that is really important so that we find the first case in a cluster, not the 50th case. That is vitally important. Then, we also need to be ready to respond as a community if we know there is virus circulating. So we need to make sure that we understand that COVID Safe Plans, and we follow them. We need to provide our contact details so that we can very rapidly get hold of people. As we saw in this most recent cluster, it is household transmission that is the biggest risk. So we need to know about cases as quickly as possible so that we can work with households to stop transmission within that household and to stop people going to work whilst infectious, remembering that the three days before you get symptoms are when you are most infectious, particularly that 24 hours before. And no one can know what is going to happen, so that is why we've just got to be so careful if we've got virus circulating.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, what will the [inaudible] before this cluster happened, there wasn't a limit on restrictions in [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes, there was a limit of 100 and we've reduced that back to 30. As we've gone through, we're now eight months into knowing more about this virus, and we've understood things and we now know that indoors and family gatherings, because family gatherings and indoor parties and groups are the biggest risk and that is why, unfortunately, as we go forward to protect everyone, we need to permanently reduce that 100 gathering size down to 30. Just because that is what has really protected us as we've dealt with this most recent cluster.

REPORTER:

So will that apply [inaudible], like a picnic at a park or something?

DR YOUNG:

At this point in time, any gatherings where there isn't a COVID Safe Plan are limited to 30. Because it is those COVID Safe Plans that have really kept us safe, they've worked exceptionally well. I will be honest with you all, I thought we'd have a lot more cases than 55. When I saw where we got those cases and where they were spreading, I was amazed that we managed to contain it. It was due to an enormous amount of hard work by the community and adhering to all of the requirements and also by the public health units, particularly the West Moreton and the Metro South public units who managed those contacts so successfully.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

We are seeing reduced numbers of cases in Sydney, so they had their last case of unlinked transmission back on the 8th of September, so the risk is decreasing. But having said that, I still don't think that is ideal. That is not the intent of the border zone, the intent of the border zone is people who live there – because we know they have that strong relationship with Queensland – to be able to come into Queensland. It is not really designed for people to meet up there.

REPORTER:

Just to clarify on being 28 days straight [inaudible] October 5th [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

At this point in time in Queensland, we make those decisions at the end of each month, so that is when that decision will be made.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

The problem with cruise ships is that they lead to transmission very, very readily. We know that from the past, we always saw outbreaks of norovirus, we've seen outbreaks of flu, so it is not surprising that you would see outbreaks of COVID. So really, they are not safe.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, because we know that if someone goes onto that cruise ship from wherever that they might have the infection and it would spread. We saw that as one of the early consequences of this virus. When there were very, very few cases in the world, we saw that cruise ships just magnified those case numbers. So no, they're something that would be quite late in our process before we think they're a good idea.

REPORTER:

The Premier said the other day that other restrictions could be lifted by the end of the month. Are there any that you have told her to be safe [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We've been having ongoing discussions. We're finalising them at the moment.

REPORTER:

Was there or was there not an agreement [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So there was an existing agreement that did expire then. As I've demonstrated to you, Lane, we asked for that to be extended because that support was important and that request was denied. And so the claim coming out of the Federal Government that we didn't request an extension is just plain wrong. I'd also like to point out that the ADF is continuing to support a number of other states and territories with their border restrictions. So you've got to ask, again, what is so different about Queensland. Why do we have this conga line of Morrison Government MPs rocking up here to criticise our very strong and effective COVID restrictions.

REPORTER:

Accusing the Treasurer of lying, what are you trying to say?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well he accused me of lying. On radio this morning, he accused me of not requesting... that the Queensland Government did not request that extension. Now you've seen very, very clearly that we did, not just informally, but also formally. And so I think he should apologise.

REPORTER:

What was your reaction to the [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I read that whole report, Patrick, and overall it finds that there was no corrupt conduct. It does make some recommendations about record keeping around advice from the Integrity Commissioner. I understand the Premier has confirmed that we will accept those recommendations and implement them.

REPORTER:

But what about the [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well there was no finding of corrupt conduct there...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well the CCC very clearly found that there was no evidence of corrupt conduct there but that there was improvements that could be made to record keeping and we'll implement those recommendations.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] situation with the medi-hotels [inaudible]. The guy that I spoke to [inaudible] on Monday has been on radio saying he's had one visit from a medical professional. He's had brain surgery. Is that adequate?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'll let the Chief Health Officer address to the extent that we can... those individual matters. And obviously, as I've said previously there's limits to the extent that we can. But the medi-hotel is an initiative that we've put in place to provide those additional health supports and if people are in those hotels they're able to request those additional health supports. It's not the case that we will just have clinicians fronting up to them on a regular basis. There's obviously both risks to clinicians there as well as not necessarily a need to do that but there is the ability for them to request those health supports and I'll ask Jeannette to address that.

DR YOUNG:

Yes, the medi-health hotel has been set up so that anyone in that hotel can ask for assistance 24/7, seven days a week. So that is there. It's not there for people to go and intrude on the lives of people. It is there to provide that support. If they need more support than that then they can be transferred to hospital, and of course we've got a lot of hospitals here in Brisbane that could provide that care.

REPORTER:

The Government still hasn't signed off on the royalty agreement with Adani [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm not across the detail of those commercial in confidence discussions. They're led by the Treasury. But we have been very clear from day one that that project would be required to pay royalties to the state. That's precisely how we pay for our schools and our hospitals is by raising revenue in ways like that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It's something that we're happy to consider. We've taken advice on that matter in the past, but the LNP has no credibility whatsoever when it comes to residential facilities taking care of young people. I mean this is... these are the same people, the very same people who closed the Barratt Centre and the result was people died. And the investigation found that the then minister didn't even read the report into that incident. And so, they have no credibility whatsoever when it comes to health. What we know they will do is that they will cut. That's the only way they can fund their \$23 billion dollars of promises is by making cuts – cuts to public health units, cuts to mental health services, cuts right across the board. That's what they did last time and what they'll do again, and I don't think any Queenslanders would believe any commitment they make around healthcare.

REPORTER:

Minister, what's your response to the [inaudible] and was there anyone disciplined or held accountable in relation to the rollout of [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, we welcome the Auditor-General's report into the rollout of that system. It's an incredibly complex system, more than 60,000 users. We acknowledged at the time that there were problems with the rollout and that they were being addressed. There's nothing particularly new in this report that we hadn't disclosed previously, but there were two recommendations and I understand the Department is very happy to take them onboard.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] are you satisfied with the treatment of people [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Look, as I said on ABC radio this morning I've had a discussion with both the Director-General and the Chief Health Officer this morning to ensure that he and everyone in that medi-hotel is getting the level of support that they need. As you've heard from the Chief Health Officer it may be a matter of being clear that we're not doing rounds in this hotel as we might in a hospital, but if anyone needs health support that they can request it.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The most important thing with that rollout was that we got on top of the issues. That took some time and cost extra money. We were clear about that at the time. But the system is now operating well as you would have seen if you read all of the report. It indicated that the system performed well, that we would not have been able to respond to the pandemic as effectively as we did without it, and indeed there is a recommendation in there that it should now be extended further.

REPORTER:

But no one's [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The most important thing was that we fixed the issues and we've done that.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I said at the time that we were investing additional resources to address those issues. That's precisely what we did.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah, so I've been briefed on the results of that. The Director-General, the Mental Health Commissioner, as well as the chief executive of Metro North have looked into that matter. I understand Metro North will issue a statement later today which acknowledges that they could have done better and systems improvements that they will make to ensure that they do.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'll allow them to make that statement rather than get into the details of it. But I understand that it has been recognised that the means of discharge there were inappropriate and that they'll take steps to ensure it doesn't happen again.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

All of our projects have an expectation that they will come in on time and on budget, and where that's not the case we seek to improve on that over time.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] do you ever expect the limit on gatherings to be increased [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

The advice from Jeannette is that for now 30 is appropriate. We'll continue to review restrictions as we have throughout based on the situation here as well as our learnings about the virus in other parts of the world, and that's what we'll continue to do.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] on the clusters, are we able to say that these recent clusters are over, they're done?

DR YOUNG:

No, we can never say that because as we saw between the first cluster related to those three young women who went to Melbourne and the second cluster which was the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, there was a missing case in the middle that we didn't pick up. We could have a missing case out of these past 55 people, we could have a missing case that we've not picked up. I think it is unlikely because of the large amount of testing that's been done. That's why I keep on saying each day I really want to see at least that 5000 figure achieved to give us some assurance that we don't have missing cases out there. We also know that around 20 per cent of people are totally asymptomatic – they never, ever get symptoms but they can pass it on. So no, we can't say 14 days after not having any infectious cases in the community that we mightn't still get a case going forward which is why we have to maintain those restrictions. It's why we need that gathering of 30, that's why we need all those COVID Safe Plans, that's why we need people to maintain social distancing, and, I have seen that people have stopped wearing masks again which I can understand, but if you're in an environment

that you can't socially distance you should still be wearing a mask. I'm not mandating it because I think Queenslanders have got an enormous amount of common sense and I think they've done a really, really good job, but that is one thing I would like to see people starting to practise a bit more of. And I think that might have to be our new way of living for the foreseeable future. So people need to do all of those things because, yes, you're very astute, you're quite correct, yes, we could have missed a case somewhere and we could have a chain of transmission happening that we don't know about today.

REPORTER:

Are there still five active cases?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, there are five active cases.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] the decision won't be made until October 31?

DR YOUNG:

That is our current protocol, yes.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

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

Date: 25 September 2020

Duration: 24 minutes 30 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

In some more good news for Queensland today, a very happy Friday, zero new cases overnight. This is absolutely welcome news and I am very proud of the work that everyone is doing across our state. We still have five active cases, our total confirmed cases is 1153. We've had over 5000 tests in the last 24 hours. So Queensland, keep up that great work. So today we have some announcements to make. Firstly, and this is good news because we're doing so well with COVID that we can actually ease some restrictions even more across Queensland. We will be increasing the density from one per four square metres to one per two square metres outdoors. So today I can announce that more people will be able to meet their friends in a local beer garden or at an outdoor café. Effective from 1am on October the 1st, we are increasing the number of people who can gather in these places as long as it is outdoors. It means businesses can increase the number of patrons from one per four square metres to one per two square metres. So this is what some of the businesses have been calling for, I've been listening, people have raised it with me as well in regional Queensland, it is going to be very welcome and it means more people can enjoy outdoor cafes, dining, beer gardens across Queensland. Also, more people will be allowed into our theme parks and our zoos. End of year school and sports events will be able to increase from 500 to 1000 people outdoors, but you must have a COVID Safe checklist. So, for example if people are thinking about having Christmas carols at the end of the year, you will be allowed to have 1000 people. Thirdly, stadiums capacity will also be increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent. We are able to do this because Queenslanders have done such a great job with COVID, our health response, we are on top of the health response which means now we can help the economy recover more, which means more people are allowed into these venues, which means more staff can come on as well. So hopefully we will see people back to work as part of our economic plan for recovery. The next issue I want to address before handing over to the Deputy Premier is our borders. I am still very concerned that the Australian Defence Force, through the federal government, is withdrawing resources from the end of September. I have been advised that the Australian Defence Force will remain on the New South Wales and Victoria border until mid-October, Northern Territory end of October and South Australia middle of October, and South Australia is trying, I understand, to extend that to the end of October. I don't think it is fair or reasonable that Queensland has been singled out here. I had written to the Prime Minister, I had a response back from the Minister for Defence where it

states very clearly that they would not be moving on Queensland. Let me be very clear too, Peter Dutton said yesterday he does not support Queensland's position on the borders. To Peter Dutton, let me say this, there is a federal court case, this is a clear federal court case that says Western Australia and Queensland borders have kept community transmission out of their states. Queensland joined that action with Western Australia, and of course that position was won over... over Clive Palmer and the Commonwealth's evidence was also taken into account. So my question is, why is Queensland being singled out? We are one country, other states are allowed to have some relaxations and once again I urge the Commonwealth to reconsider and treat Queensland like everyone else. Stop singling Queensland out. I want the best for the people in this state. My job is to look after five million Queenslanders and you only have to look at our results, Queensland is doing a mighty job and that is because of everyone working together. And I don't want to see – I know the police do an amazing job of making sure that the borders will continue – but in this circumstance I would've hoped that we could all work together in the interests of everyone during this time. So I will hand over to the Deputy Premier and then we will hear from the Chief Health Officer and State Disaster Coordinator and then we will take some questions.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thanks very much Premier. Nothing makes me prouder to be a Queenslander than a day like this. It is a beautiful day outdoors, we have zero new cases of COVID-19. We have just five active cases, less active cases per capita than just about everywhere else in the world. And we met our testing target of 5000 tests – 5024 tests in the last testing period. We opened up Queensland to the ACT at 1am this morning and we've also opened up our hospitals and our aged care centres to visitors today and I know there will be lots of very happy older Queenslanders – grandmas and granddads – getting visitors today and over the weekend and I wish them all the best. We also lifted that restriction on gatherings from 10 to 30 today and we also said that we were considering which other restrictions could now be lifted because Queensland had done so well, and that is the announcement that we're making today, that we're taking Queensland outdoors. It is beautiful weather, we're coming into the warmer time of year and we've learned a lot more about this virus than we knew when we first put these restrictions in place. What we've learned is that the virus, the risk of transmission of the virus is much, much lower outdoors than it is indoors, and that means that we can have larger gatherings outdoors. We are allowing our COVID Safe venues – pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants – that have outdoor spaces to double the number of people, double the density of people they can have in those outdoor spaces. That is like beer gardens, courtyards, alfresco dining, verandas, that kind of thing, they will be able to have one person per two square metres. We are also increasing the size of events that can go ahead with just a checklist, rather than a COVID Safe Plan, from 500 to 1000 for outdoor events, as well as allowing our stadiums to operate at 75 per cent capacity, and increase from the current cap of 50 per cent capacity. This is a further reward for Queenslanders, a further loosening of restrictions that will come into effect at 1am on the 1st of October and it is perfect timing, I think, to be able to get out, get about and enjoy Queensland.

DR YOUNG:

No new cases in Queensland overnight, which is excellent news. So that cluster hasn't led to anymore cases. We do have two cases on a ship off Weipa that we are just working through. So the plan is to evacuate them when we are able to through to Cairns, and look after them there. We've done that multiple times now, we've had cases on ships and we've worked with Maritime Safety Queensland and we've worked with the ship, of course, to sort out what is best for the crew. We do know that we'll expect more of those sorts of cases going forward as we see more cases around the world. We are now at 32 million cases around the world, heading towards that figure of one million deaths. But we are prepared for that. We have quarantine services in place in our hotels so that we quarantine anyone coming from overseas, because we know they are at higher risk of having COVID-19, and we've been doing a lot of work with all of those freight ships and other ships that are coming into our waters around Queensland, so that will of course continue to keep Queenslanders safe. Now, exciting news today, I believe, in terms of releasing a lot of those restrictions and getting Queenslanders outdoors. It is great to have these press conferences outdoors, we're getting more and more information that outdoors is the safest place to be and we have got the best climate, I think, in Australia and the world in terms of living our lives outdoors. So, I would strongly recommend to everyone, think about whether you can have your gathering or your function outdoors - Sun safe of course - but do that as we go forward and I think that will really keep people much safer. We know there are problems with indoors. If you do have to be indoors and you've got the ability to open windows, say in your own house, let lots of air go through, that is really important. So, try not to shut yourselves in with air conditioning. Remembering of course, we also need people to be cool, so if we have a heatwave, we will have to work through what that means. But wherever possible I strongly recommend people move their lives as much as possible outdoors.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Good morning all. So, just the operational summary for the last 24 hours to start with. 46 domestic flights into Queensland, 3276 passengers were processed, four refused entry, 248 placed into quarantine. On our road borders we intercepted 3719 vehicles and we refused 89 person entry, four were placed into quarantine. We currently have 4010 persons in hotel quarantine, in 24 hotels across the state. Unfortunately, two male persons, one at Coolangatta and one at Goondiwindi tried to get into the state and after being given repeated warnings that they had no lawful purpose to enter, including one becoming quite aggressive with police, they were given \$4000 on the spot fines. Can I just remind people with the announcement of the new restrictions as of today, for the ACT people, that people returning to Queensland or coming into Queensland from the ACT will need a G-Pass, a border declaration G-Pass, they can expect at the airport to still be met by police and processed and the validity of their pass checked, but then after that they will be able to of course enter without any other impediment. So very important that they are prepared for that when they come through, and just to remind too that is only by air. If they travel through New South Wales by road they will be entering a hotspot, they won't be allowed in. And next week when we go to the broader area for the LGAs in New South Wales that have been declared, just a reminder for everyone that whilst you can come into Queensland and go anywhere, they will still require an X-Pass and also for Queenslanders going into those areas, coming back they will require an X-Pass. So a word of caution to everyone as well, that it will mean more travel and busier road borders for us we expect increased traffic [inaudible] on our road borders, so not withstanding the changes and

the very positive news around that, they will still be busy so people need to plan ahead for that.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, are you aware of a [inaudible] in New South Wales?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we did have some preliminary discussion at AHPPC yesterday about that, so that is being investigated by New South Wales.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It does, yes.

REPORTER:

And they haven't found the [inaudible] or are we operating in the proviso that that resets the 28 days?

DR YOUNG:

No, we need to wait for them to complete their investigation but it would appear that way.

REPORTER:

On the Weipa ship, why are those two cases not [inaudible] what happens with the rest of the crew members on that ship as well?

DR YOUNG:

So they will be considered Queensland cases when they come onshore. At the moment they're offshore, they've been tested offshore, so it is when they come into Queensland, which I hope will be later today.

REPORTER:

Have they tested positive? Where is the ship from?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, they have tested positive. It is one of those ones I think that is registered in Panama, come from Asia, it has crew from a lot of different places.

REPORTER:

So what will happen to the rest of the crew? We understand about 30 or so crew?

DR YOUNG:

That is correct, yes.

REPORTER:

What happens with all of those crew?

DR YOUNG:

So we've done this many, many times now. So we have a very good process that we've got in place with MSQ, so we work with the captain of the ship to test everyone and they all then need to manage, as best as they can, in terms of quarantine. I mean, a lot of these ships now, people actually have single bedrooms and often even single bathrooms, so they can quarantine quite well on the ship. So then we will continue to test them. Of course, they may choose to leave Queensland and Australian waters and return overseas, that is their choice,

REPORTER:

And we'll count those people tomorrow?

DR YOUNG:

We will count them as soon as they're onshore in Queensland.

REPORTER:

With the new restrictions, does that take any... is there any change to having to be seated, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That is correct, at the moment it is still the same, it is just increasing the density to one per two.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, the exemption process is based on the public health risk, so it is based on the risk of where those people have come from who are asking for the exemption. So, none of that has changed, what has changed of course is that people coming from the ACT, as of 1 o'clock this morning don't need an exemption or a reason to come into Queensland, they just need to fill out the pass, and not have been in a hotspot area in the previous 14 days. And then on 1 October, people who live in that expanded border zone in New South Wales won't need an exemption to come into Queensland, they will just have to fill out that border pass.

REPORTER:

Minister Miles, can I ask you about you accusing the Treasurer of lying [inaudible] do you apologise for that comment [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I understand Josh is a bit bemused and that is true, I thought he had accused me of lying about one thing when actually he'd accused me of lying about a different thing. Both of them were equally offensive.

REPORTER:

What was it [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So in that interview, which I had seen a summary of at that time, he accused us of making up that the defence force were being used as a pawn in the border war against in Queensland. That was the quote. He said it was garbage. Now, that is not garbage. I think you can very clearly see that they are discriminating against Queensland, they continue to provide defence force support to other states. You've got to remember that our borders aren't just in place with New South Wales, they're also in place with Victoria. The army have...

REPORTER:

[inaudible] accused you of lying saying that you hadn't requested an extension, you were wrong...

DEPUTY PREMIER:

As I've said Lane, I understand Josh is offended because I thought he'd called me a liar about one thing, when actually he had called me a liar about a different thing. I accept that. But both are important, both are true, both were being said by Commonwealth Government Ministers and a week ago, Josh Frydenberg said it was a conspiracy to suggest that federal government ministers were being used to propagate a war against Queensland and a war against our efforts against COVID, and then yesterday and today he is part of that. I mean they can call me all the names in the world they want to. They can call me all the names in the world they want to, but that is not going to affect my resolve, or Queenslanders resolve to address this virus.

REPORTER:

And just to clarify too, you didn't actually listen to the interview, you just read a summary?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah. I had done two radio interviews and then read a summary of his radio interview, which had happened at the same time as I was on another radio interview. I saw that he had said what I had said was garbage, and I took that to mean that, given I had received a number of questions about whether we had requested a border extension, I took it to mean that was what he was talking about. But actually, it turns out he was talking about the Federal Government's use – misuse, in my view – of the army to propagate an argument with us in the lead-up to the state election. Now, all of those facts are now clear.

REPORTER:

Is that saying that you're the one [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well I'm not the one withdrawing the army from our borders. You know, it's the army that have been there supporting our police, doing an incredibly important job keeping COVID out of our state — and I make this point again, not just from New South Wales, but also from Victoria. When Peter Dutton comes out, calls me names, says he doesn't support our borders he might think he is just talking about New South Wales, but those border restrictions are also in place for Victoria. And yet they happily continue to provide Defence Force support to New South Wales with the Victorian border, to the Northern Territory who don't have a border with Victoria. So you really need to put to them questions about why Queensland is so different, why the army is being withdrawn from Queensland and not from those other states, why we have this conga line of Morrison Government Ministers everyday on every program out there attacking me, attacking Queensland, attacking our restrictions that have been so successful. And the only difference is that we have an election coming up. So who do you think is making it political?

REPORTER:

Premier, do you take responsibility for what happens in your office?

PREMIER:

The Chief of Staff is responsible for running the day-to-day office.

REPORTER:

Premier, the Chief of Staff reports directly to you. That is what the triple-C said. Do you take responsibility for what happens in your office?

PREMIER:

Yeah, I will always take responsibility for what happens, not only in my office, but for government as well.

REPORTER:

So how can you justify not reading the [inaudible] that you commissioned?

PREMIER:

Oh Sarah, I am so glad you asked me that because it is very clear that when the triple-C started an assessment, which turned into an investigation, the Director-General forwarded that report to them and did not forward it to me.

REPORTER:

Did you ask Dave Stewart what was in the report [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

No, never. Never. Never. I was not given the report. It was forwarded to the triple-C. It is completely inappropriate for that report to be forwarded to me whilst there is an assessment, which then turned into an investigation.

REPORTER:

Sorry, why is it appropriate? It is your document. It is your document you asked for.

PREMIER:

No it is not my document. It is not my document Sarah. You are completely wrong.

REPORTER:

It is a document that the Department of Premier and Cabinet had asked for.

PREMIER:

It had been forwarded to the triple-C. It was completely inappropriate for the Director-General to forward that to me. I have answered your question. Patrick?

REPORTER:

With the knowledge after that report was delivered, you up in Townsville came out and put on the public record [inaudible] thanks to David [inaudible]. You said he didn't do anything wrong. Do you regret those comments now?

PREMIER:

Well that was my understanding at the time Patrick.

REPORTER:

Premier, about a month ago you said you would be [inaudible] exemption unit [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes. My understanding is there is extra people in the Exemptions Unit now.

REPORTER:

Did you make an error when you didn't complete that declaration form?

PREMIER:

The processes have been fixed up.

REPORTER:

But why did you not fill it in?

PREMIER:

Sorry?

REPORTER:

Can you reflect on that error?

PREMIER:

Because there was nowhere on that form that said to sign it Patrick. So, the forms came into the office, came into me, and they went directly to the office manager.

REPORTER:

Do you agree that the information you provided to Parliament was incorrect? I appreciate that you've said...

PREMIER:

No. No, I always tell Parliament exactly to the best of my knowledge information at the time.

REPORTER:

The triple-C said it wasn't correct, the information that was provided. Will you be correcting that as [inaudible] process?

PREMIER:

But it has come out through the report Patrick. Okay? I can only update Parliament to the best of my knowledge at that particular point in time.

REPORTER:

So you obviously [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Yes. Absolutely.

REPORTER:

Premier, did you ask [inaudible] Stewart whether there was anything in your report that [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

No I did not. No.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Because the report was forwarded to the triple-C Sarah.

REPORTER:

But wouldn't you...?

PREMIER:

No. It is forwarded to the triple-C. completely Inappropriate.

REPORTER:

It's part of your...

PREMIER:

No Sarah. We have addressed this question. You are asking me the same question over and over again.

REPORTER:

Isn't there a legal responsibility for Mr Barbagallo's employer, who gets a report showing the failings, that they then act on it. He retired voluntarily you said. So at that point, if he doesn't retire voluntarily then he would have been in for the foreseeable future. Isn't there a legal responsibility to act on it at that point?

PREMIER:

Sorry, I don't understand your point Patrick. Say it again.

REPORTER:

Well you had the report for a week before you announced his volunteered resignation. But isn't there a responsibility on his employer to know about this?

PREMIER:

He left because he was unwell.

REPORTER:

Can you just explain why it wouldn't have been inappropriate for you to [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

It was forwarded to the triple-C. It was inappropriate for the Director-General to forward me that report. Okay? The triple-C were conducting an assessment, which turned into an investigation. You would have to ask the Director-General or ask the triple-C. Okay?

REPORTER:

Can I ask you about something else?

PREMIER:

Yes. Of course Lydia. And please, we are not addressing the dancing at the moment either.

REPORTER:

A month ago you [inaudible] domestic violence [inaudible]. Do you expect that to be [inaudible] on that report, the government goes into caretaker?

PREMIER:

Look, I am happy to check that with Minister Farmer.

REPORTER:

Premier, the LNP has referred a number of fundraising events to the Electoral Commission to see if they breach the donor laws. [inaudible] exactly what they have asked to be investigated?

PREMIER:

Look, my understanding is that there was some report that the LNP had referred, I think it was Deb Frecklington or themselves, to the triple-C over developer donations. I think Queenslanders need to know exactly what has been referred. I think Queenslanders have a right to know.

REPORTER:

Peter Dutton said yesterday that you needed to pull the Deputy Premier into line. Do you think he is out of control?

PREMIER:

I am not listening to Peter Dutton.

REPORTER:

Paul Pisasale [inaudible]. Do you have any regrets on how the Party or yourself handled it? There's been lots of claims [inaudible] people like Jo-Ann Miller.

PREMIER:

What Paul Pisasale... I'm pretty sure... Has the court case been finalised, sorry?

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yeah, I probably shouldn't comment until there is sentencing. But I have always acted appropriately. And let me say that it is very regrettable that a person holding such a high office let the people of Ipswich down. He was held in very high esteem, and obviously he was leading a very, very double life. Okay? Thanks everyone.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Deputy Premier Steven Miles, Barry O'Rourke, Brittany Lauga and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young

Date: 29 September 2020

Duration: 27 minutes

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It is another day of no new cases of COVID-19 in Queensland, exactly what we hoped to see. We still have just eight active cases. In the last testing period we did 4368 tests, a bit below that level we would like to see, and so of course we continue to encourage anyone with any symptoms to go and get tested, and we have those testing facilities available right throughout the state. The Chief Health Officer Jeanette Young and I are in town today as part of Health Heroes Week, to thank our health heroes, the healthcare workers who have gotten Queensland through this pandemic. And of course we will be doing that with our fantastic local MPs, Barry and Brittany, they've done a fantastic job of supporting our healthcare workers. And when you think about it, the health staff in the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service really have gone above and beyond. They've managed to keep us to just 10 cases all up, they've performed 22,602 tests, they right now are in the middle of our elective surgery blitz, doing a catch up of around 1000 elective surgeries. They are only able to do that incredibly important work because we have been able to rebuild our frontline health services, we've employed in the Central Queensland HHS alone 114 extra doctors, 265 extra nurses and that of course came after the LNP had cut 197 staff from this health service, including 41 nurses and it was disappointing that Deb Frecklington was in town today, but she didn't outline, she didn't admit how many nurses and midwives and health staff would be cut from this health service to pay for her \$23 billion of election commitments. What the COVID pandemic has taught us – taught us all really – is how important it is to ensure that our health services have a sustainable supply chain, one that isn't reliant on one location or one source or one mode of transport, and that has been an incredibly important lesson. Many of us didn't talk much about PPE and hospital supply chains before, but now of course, it is a wide and common topic of discussion and it has been incredibly important to ensure that our health staff have at all times the equipment that they need to keep us safe. And so that is what has led to the really exciting announcement that we have today, and that is that here in Rockhampton the Palaszczuk government will build a central Queensland distribution hub for equipment, essential supplies for our hospitals. It is part of our critical supply stockpile. We want to make sure that we have a massive stockpile of all of the equipment that we need right throughout the state, and the logistics that will ensure that we can distribute that stock into our health services as we need them. You've seen here, that the workers here do just a fantastic job supporting health facilities from here in Rockhampton, all the way west to Boulia, a massive area and they do a really great job. But as you can see, having had a look around they need more space if they are going to hold the levels of stock that we think we

need to hold during a pandemic and in the post-COVID world. And so we will build a new warehouse and distribution centre four times the size of this one. It will hold 730 pallets of equipment, it will be 2175 square metres. We want to provide for our health heroes one of the biggest stockpiles in the world. We never want a Queensland Health nurse to ever have to worry again if they will have the mask that they want. We never again want one of our doctors to have to worry if they can proceed with a procedure because they are not sure they'll have all the equipment that they might need, no matter what happens. And that is what this initiative is all about. It is part of a \$120 million investment into our strategic stockpile. And it won't just serve us well during pandemics, it will also serve us well during disasters. As you all know, when cyclones, floods, bushfires hit, they too can interrupt supply chains and so by having these strategic reserves in parts of the state – important parts of the state like right here in Rockhampton – we can make sure that our health services here have sufficient supply without having to rely on getting trucks up from Brisbane. I would like to ask Brittany and Barry to say something about. We also have Dr Julie-Anne Graham, the ED of Medical Services here from Rockhampton Hospital who is available, and of course the Chief Health Officer Dr Jeanette Young, a former ED of medical services here at the Rockhampton Hospital also available to take questions.

BARRY O'ROURKE:

Well good morning, Barry O'Rourke, Member for Rockhampton. It's great to be here today when we're actually future-proofing Rockhampton and central Queensland, and Queensland for that matter, in the supply of PPE services and equipment. The staff here have done an absolutely wonderful job. They cover a huge area – from here to the Northern Territory border. But this will actually allow us to be able to shift stock strategically around the state as we need it. As you'd all be aware, central Queensland gets its fair share – more than its fair share of natural disasters, so this is about really future-proofing Rockhampton and future-proofing central Queensland.

BRITTANY LAUGA:

Thanks Barry, and thank you Deputy Premier. Brittany Lauga, State Member for Keppel. What a wonderful announcement for Rockhampton that will not only create jobs but also provide a place for us to stockpile the PPE and medical equipment and supplies that we need to service our region. It's also Health Heroes Week this week, and it's great to have Dr Young and also the Deputy Premier here to celebrate and thank our healthcare workers from right across the central Queensland region. I've just been this morning with the public health unit down on [inaudible] street, thanking them for their very important work in epidemiology, in contact tracing, in environmental health, and of course the staff there that are working on developing the COVID Safe Plans for the events and tourism experiences that are now operating under those COVID Safe Plans, which is an important economic contribution that our healthcare workers are making to the future of this region. The Capricorn Food and Wine Festival on the weekend, which operated under a COVID Safe Plan developed in collaboration with our environmental health unit, actually meant that we had visitors to this region spending money here and enjoying our beautiful Capricorn region. It's only as a result of the hard work of those environmental officers developing those plans to keep us safe that we can keep our economy going, because we know that the best economic response to this

pandemic has been containing this virus and making sure that our communities can be kept safe. So thank you to all of the healthcare workers – whether you're working here in this warehouse delivering important stockpiles and services and supplies for our medical professionals and healthcare workers, whether you're a contact tracer, an environmental health officer, a cleaner, a wardie – all of those healthcare workers have been working tirelessly over the last nine months to help keep our community safe. So thank you.

DR GRAHAM:

Good morning, my name is Dr Julieanne Graham. I'm Executive Director of Medical Services for Central Queensland. I just wanted to say thank you for this initiative. The safety of our staff is absolutely paramount, and this will help secure the confidence of the staff in being able to deliver really high quality healthcare and being able to feel safe doing it. Here in central Queensland, we have been... our transport lines have been disrupted during COVID. We don't have as many flights into central Queensland as we have previously, and so the stocks of our PPE have been a concern to staff. Right now, we know that we've got 95 days of N95 masks, the top of the range masks to protect us against COVID, but that's our normal use and we know that if we get an outbreak like they've had in Victoria, that 95 days' worth of supply here in Rockhampton might shrink down considerably. So having a warehouse that can stock four times that many masks and four times as many stock of everything we need gives our staff confidence that we can deliver the great healthcare that we're here to do for the people of central Queensland. So thank you. Great initiative.

REPORTER:

Can I just ask one question, just quickly? In terms of a demand for PPE, particularly in those hospitals out Biloela, I guess out west as well – is there a demand for extra PPE, like are they, I guess, in need of it?

DR GRAHAM:

We've been very lucky to be well supplied with PPE, but it's the confidence that's key because we don't know what's going to happen next week and if there is community transmission in our area, the amount of PPE that we go through goes up quickly. And whilst we have enough to get us through our current conditions, having the security of knowing that we can ramp up the use of the PPE very considerably gives us just a lot more confidence that we can continue to deliver services under any conditions.

DR YOUNG:

Well it's wonderful to be back in Rockhampton for Health Heroes Week because certainly we've got a lot of health heroes here in central Queensland. They've been managing their response right from day one. They did have a number of cases and managed them very, very methodically and carefully, and then went on and have continued to manage them. So even yesterday there were people turning up to the fever clinic to be tested which is an absolute commitment because we know that as people don't see cases their tendency to come forward to get tested wanes. It's really good to see it's continuing to happen here because we actually don't know where the next case will turn up in Queensland. We need to be prepared at all stages. And here, this set up here and the new facility that's been built, will stand central

Queensland in very good stead. Although we never ran out of PPE in Queensland, it came close. We did have a stockpile, but it wasn't a stockpile that expected to see what would happen as has happened with this coronavirus pandemic. So it's excellent to see that we will have a very, very substantial stockpile going forward that will manage anything that happens. And I think that is critical because I know early on I was getting a lot of calls from clinicians who were worried that they might have to treat people without PPE, and I always made it very clear that would never happen, but knowing that we have this amount of PPE available throughout the state as we go forward is absolutely essential. So we have seen a loosening of restrictions here in Queensland and hearing what happened last weekend here is excellent, and we'll be able to have more of those sorts of events going forward. And that's really important so everyone in the lead-up to Christmas – it just seems... it doesn't seem long since this pandemic started back in January and we're now talking about Christmas – but in the lead-up to Christmas we will be able to have more events, we will be able to get out and do more. But the most important message for all of us, for that to continue safely, if you're sick please stay at home and get yourself tested because we always want to try and find the first case in a cluster, not the 40th case. Because if it's the 40th case we find, we've got a long way to go before we'll be able to get on top of things, but if we find the first case we'll be able to act really quickly. So it's important to continue to come forward and get tested if you've got any symptoms that you've got any concern about. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, you're here for the Health Heroes Week, what else do you hope to achieve while you're here in Rockhampton?

DR YOUNG:

It's really about catching up with people that I caught up with earlier on in the pandemic. So there were a lot of plans that were put in place, and I just like to hear about how they're going and what work's happened and what we can assist with from Brisbane because they've done so much work here getting sorted for the clinical response, but also for the whole of society response. So it's really important, as we go through our roadmap and we remove restrictions, that people understand the reasoning behind that and why we're doing it. So it's really about catching up with people and finding what issues they've got and what they're learning.

REPORTER:

Obviously your staff [inaudible] here, in terms of this region and the way they have handled the Health Heroes here, [inaudible] the pandemic how does that make you feel coming back here to see the work that has been done in Rocky?

DR YOUNG:

It's fantastic...it's always lovely to come back to Rockhampton, it's a beautiful part of the world. I really, really enjoyed my time here. I learnt a lot, people here taught me a lot, they were very forgiving of a very young, junior medical administrator coming in and it was a great time. And to have seen the developments since then, to see what has happened here in Rockhampton but also across the whole of Central Queensland is just fantastic.

REPORTER:

This new facility, so four times the size of what we have here...where is that being built? And talk us through jobs, and all of that as well?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah so we are in the process of identifying an appropriate location for this new hub and once we do we will be able to give you more information, but of course there will be jobs in both constructing that as well as in the new facility it will take more staff, more workers to manage...it's actually a lot more complicated than it sounds, all of the different products have different expiry dates, they need to be rotated...clearly the needs of each of our facilities very widely are also very complicated so they will be more health jobs in managing the facility as well as the important work of the frontline staff that they are ultimately there to support.

REPORTER:

Why was Rockhampton chosen to have the facility?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Rockhampton is a really important health service for Queensland...it's centrally located obviously here in the Central Queensland region and the health service here is very, very well equipped to host this for us – they won't just service this region though. The idea is that if we have well supplied hubs in different parts of the state then we can at any point in time get products to our healthcare facilities in the best way possible to get products from where we have them to where we need them.

REPORTER:

In terms of the facility as well do you anticipate it will be located close to the hospital or is it going to be out of town...what's your...what are you hoping I suppose?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

We're still working through what the options there are, it might be that somewhere just outside of town but close to transport makes sense, but we'll work through that level of detail.

REPORTER:

Just on the nurse that tested positive to coronavirus here in Rockhampton, I understand the findings are there ready to be released...when can we expect that to happen?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I really had hoped that we would've been able to get that report out sooner but I can assure people is that any recommendations that have been made to change practices have been implemented and the check of all of our aged care facilities that we committed to do after that incident came back with a very, very strong report that all of our facilities were complying with the appropriate procedures and protocols. As I understand the release of that report has been delayed by natural justice processes, so people who are the subject of the investigation

have certain legal rights and they've chosen to exercise those. The commitment that I've given is that as soon as it is legally possible for me to release it I will do so.

REPORTER:

Do you expect that will be before caretaker mode?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look I really hope so, but the advice that I have is that it won't be affected by caretaker mode so we can and will release it at the very point that it is available. But I really hope that it will be available sooner.

REPORTER:

I have a question if I may? On the stand-off in the port in Sydney, is that a concern for you or is that a concern for the health supply coming into Queensland?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I haven't been briefed on any direct concerns related to that dispute... obviously it is something that we will monitor. It is also something that underlines just how important the initiatives we're announcing today are, so we aren't relying on just in time logistics, that we aren't waiting for stock to arrive so that we have stock on hand for a very significant period of time so that we don't need to worry about things like that. And certainly the stockpile that we've already managed to put together would stand us in good stead if there was any kind of disruption. I should also say and would like to underline this, one of the focusses of this strategy is not just to keep stock here in Queensland, but it's also to make stock here in Queensland. We can't be reliant on other countries for all of our medical supplies. COVID has proven that. And so we are working very closely with a number of Queensland based manufacturers because we want to create jobs in manufacturing health equipment here in Queensland which we think will serve Queensland in good stead, employ Queenslanders but ultimately we will be able to support other health services in Australia and in nearby regions if we ever again get into the kind of situation we saw earlier this year.

REPORTER:

What are your thoughts on a New Zealand travel bubble?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think that's a long way off – I love New Zealand and obviously there's lots of Kiwis who live here in Queensland. Both Queensland and New Zealand have done very, very well containing COVID-19. I would argue Queensland has done a little bit better, but what we need to see first of all if those cases contained in New South Wales and then Victoria is doing a very good job but they are way off achieving that 28 days of no unlinked community transmission. So our focus is on Australia and our domestic state borders but of course once it's safe to do so we would be comfortable working with the other states, the Commonwealth and New Zealand.

REPORTER:

When that does happen do you think New Zealand could beat New South Wales in being opened to Queensland?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Our focus at the moment is locally and on those cases in other states, I think that is more likely to happen sooner, but obviously the fact that New Zealand has done almost as well as Queensland means that if we were to open to other countries we would start with New Zealand.

REPORTER:

Warren Entsch has flagged Japan being the next travel bubble location, is that something being discussed at a state level at this stage?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think that would be getting a long way ahead of ourselves, I think that really goes to how desperate LNP politicians are both at a state and federal level have been to re-open our borders ahead of the health advice, ahead of when it's safe to do so, so I'll continue to take my health advice from our Chief Health Officer and not from Warren Entsch.

REPORTER:

And just finally Deb Frecklington has actually said the Deputy Premier, when is he going to speak to the Premier about the fact that you don't have a Budget or a plan to fund these announcements that you're making today?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That's a pretty strange thing for her to say. These are funded out of the existing appropriation so these are real. These will happen. These aren't fantasies like the promises that the Leader of the Opposition has made. You know she claimed to have a commitment around the Bruce Highway on the weekend which is \$50 million for consultants. You know the further she drives from Brisbane, the further she will get from every single one of the jobs created by her consultancy spending spree. Her \$50 million will do nothing but employ spivs in Brisbane to do planning – it will not concrete a single road. Will not create a single job. Whereas we have a proven track record of delivering. We've rebuilt our health services after they were cut by Deb Frecklington and Campbell Newman. And we will continue to do so. And really, the onus is on her... \$23 billion in unfunded promises... well a third of the Budget is health, so you cannot find those kinds of savings without cutting health. The Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service is a significant part of the health budget so you cannot fund her promises without making cuts to health here in Central Queensland. And so, she comes here and makes... and does not, does not give any indication about which nurses, which midwives, which doctors, which health services will be cut and I think that's the challenge for her in every town she goes to along the coast of Queensland. She should be honest. She should fess up. She should say, here in Rockhampton this many nurses will be cut, this many midwives will be cut. When they talk about cutting expenses you cannot cut \$23 billion of expenses

without nurses, midwives, doctors. They're the kind of expenses they are talking about cutting.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] specialist that used to work at the Gladstone Mater before [inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So I understand that there have been negotiations with the existing private providers there...I might ask Dr Graham who is closer to those talks about where there are up to. But I just want to underline something here. This was the State Government stepping in when a private hospital could no longer operate. So the onus here on those private services which are regulated and funded through the Federal Government and the private health system really should have been on the Commonwealth. But not once have local Federal LNP members done anything. Lifted a finger to help us save the Gladstone Mater. So people who want to talk about what services are affected there by the closure of the Mater...well it would be completely closed if we hadn't have stepped in. None of those services would be there if we hadn't have stepped in.

DR GRAHAM:

So we've been in negotiations with some of the private health specialists who have previously been working at the Mater Hospital in Gladstone and the good news story is that we have had essentially all of the oncologists that were working at the Mater Gladstone have agreed to do sessional time as visiting medical officers with CQHHS. Patients have been transferred, in fact we've got six patients who are getting their chemotherapy this week that were previously treated at the Mater Gladstone who have moved across now to Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service care. We've been working closely with those private specialists to ensure the handover of those patients is smooth and their journey is seamless. So really excited that we have been able to expand our oncology services at the Gladstone Hospital to be able to care for those patients who here previously treated at the Mater Gladstone. They have closed their oncology services this week and we have picked up where they have left off. We are also in negotiations with some of the private surgical specialists at the Mater Gladstone and we are aiming for to be able to deliver some private options for patients in Gladstone at the Gladstone Hospital in our new bigger campus which includes the old Mater Hospital. We are referring to that as the West Wing of Gladstone Hospital, and we are doing some refurbishments and upgrading of the facility so that we can continue to deliver really world standard care at the Gladstone Hospital moving forward.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press Conference

Speaker/s*: Deputy Premier Steven Miles; Small Business Minister Shannon Fentiman; Manufacturing Minister Glenn Butcher; Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer

Date: Wednesday 30 September 2020

Duration: 37 minutes 8 seconds

*Please note: Speeches by Local Members who followed Minister Butcher were not transcribed due to their focus on politics, rather than on actual governance. These omissions are indicated in the transcript.

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well as you've already heard from the Premier we have no further cases of COVID-19 here in Queensland overnight and we've revised our number of active cases down to just five meaning our total number of cases so far is 1157 and in the last testing period we did 6789 tests which is a fantastic result when you consider how low the number of cases is. Today is 245 of Queensland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's the 30th of September which means a number of important things happen tonight. The support that the Defence Force has been providing with our border restrictions will be relieved and they'll no longer be providing that support, although they've continued to support our hotel quarantine and we very much welcome that assistance for our police there. The extension of the border zone that we announced will come into effect at 1am tonight, as will the changes allowing outdoor venues with COVID-safe plans to have more people in the outdoor parts of their venue. Here in Townsville the Townsville community has done incredibly well, supported by the fantastic work of the Townsville Hospital and Health Service. It's been 39 days since the last case here and that was a case on a ship offshore. 80 days since the last local case in quarantine and they were defence personnel. But if you look at community cases it's 163 days since the last case here in Townsville on the 19th of April. If you compare that to worldwide, yesterday the world tipped over one million deaths from this awful disease compared to just six here in Queensland and that is all thanks to the efforts of Queenslanders but also, with the support of our fantastic health heroes. And so our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, and I are here in Townsville today to meet with our wonderful health staff and thank them for their incredible efforts, of course, with the support and assistance of our great local MP's – Scott Stewart and Aaron Harper.

Here in Townsville since we were elected we have employed more than 137 additional doctors and 219 additional nurses in the Townsville Hospital and Health Service and it is that effort, those extra frontline staff that have allowed us to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. That compares to the three years prior when the LNP with Deb Frecklington's support sacked 398 staff from the Townsville Hospital and Health Service. 156 of them were nurses and they were the very staff that if we hadn't rebuilt our services we would not have been able to rely upon. We would not have been able to be so successful here in Townsville. Under Labor the

budget for the Townsville Hospital and Health Service has risen to more than a billion dollars. More than a billion dollars. If you think about that, think about the fact that it is nearly seven per cent of the health budget. Now we know that the LNP, under Deb Frecklington, want to cut \$23 billion from the state budget and they haven't said how they will do it but you can not cut that kind of amount without making cuts to the health budget and without making cuts to the Townsville Hospital and Health Service budget. They are just too large a proportion of the Queensland budget. In fact, if you were to cut it through as a proportion you would have to cut Townsville Hospital and Health Service's budget alone by \$125 million every year over four years to make that \$23 billion saving. That is a lot of doctors and nurses and midwives and nurse navigators and health professionals and support staff that will need to be cut. So I understand Deb Frecklington will be here Townsville tomorrow and that is her chance to fess up, to be honest with the Townsville community about which jobs she will cut, which nurses she will cut, which health services she will cut. I understand that she's at a prawn farm today and frankly, there is something very, very fishy about her plans to cut health services and it's about time she was honest about those.

I also understand a former Townsville local is in town today too. David Crisafulli is back here after he scurried away, after he cut and run from the people of Townsville. And now he's the Shadow Tourism spokesperson. Well it's about time he explained his support as a Cabinet minister in the Newman Government for the \$188 million of cuts that they made to the tourism industry. It's about time he said how much of that \$23 billion of cuts would come from the tourism budget.

Now, the Queensland Government has set as the foundation of our economic plan our health response. That is because if you do not get the health response right you cannot get about the work of recovering your economy, getting businesses open and getting people back into work. And that's not just the task of getting on top of COVID in the first place, it's about staying on top of it. Making sure that we can continue... continue to keep Queenslanders health and safe and alive so that we can keep our businesses open, keep opening up like we are tonight. You've seen here today the incredible work of our workers in the distribution network who get the important supplies to our staff and often times they might be the unsung heroes of the health system along with our public health units, the contact tracers, even our Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young, but this year they've all come to the fore. This year we've seen how important all of our staff are. Not just the doctors and nurses, health professionals, clinicians but also the support staff because our doctors and nurses they can't do their jobs if they don't get the protective equipment, the medical supplies that they need. And so the work that people like those here at the Townsville distribution centre do is incredibly important. We learnt just how important that was at the peak of the pandemic when we had to cancel elective surgery because we were concerned that we might run out of PPE. We never did run out of PPE but it was possible that we might. At some stages we got down to just four days of certain lines. We have determined to never again put our health staff in that kind of position where they don't have confidence that they will have the resources that they need. This is all about backing our health heroes. Making sure that never again does a nurse have to worry about whether there'll be a surgical mask of the right grade available for them that day. A doctor never has to worry when they start a procedure that they will have every single piece of equipment that they might need no matter what might happen during that procedure. So supplies and logistics and PPE, they might not have been the most

exciting things about health last year but certainly this year they're incredibly important. And so I am very, very excited to be releasing today here in Townsville the Queensland Government Critical Supply Reserve Strategy. It is all about making sure we never again find ourselves reliant on one place like Wuhan for surgical masks. Here in Townsville what this plan means is that we will double the size of this existing warehouse. We will build a new warehouse and distribution centre here in Townsville. It's a \$12.6 million capital investment as well as \$7 million per year to operate it. That will mean more jobs for people to build the facility but also more jobs like the packers who you've seen and met here today. This is in addition to an additional distribution centre in Brisbane. The distribution hub, the warehouse and distribution hub for the central part of the state that I announced yesterday in Rockhampton, as well as a new warehouse in Cairns. The expansion here will see two and half times the capacity. We will go from being able to store onsite 880 pallets to a massive 6798 pallets of protective equipment and critical medical supplies that will be right here in Townsville for our health services when they need them. The expansion in Cairns will take the warehouse there from 750 square metres up to 3120 square metres allowing them to store onsite in Cairns 790 pallets.

You all know that it's not just pandemics that can impact our logistics and supply lines. Here in Queensland we regularly experience fires, floods, cyclones and they have all in the past had an impact on our hospital supply chains. This new Critical Supply Reserve will mean that those disasters will never impact on the amount of supply available in regions like this. In fact, our goal is to have 6-12 months supply of all of our equipment. And I'm really pleased to say that we've been working on it for some time, and it's already working. Right now we have 350 days supply of surgical masks – nearly a year's supply of surgical masks. Two hundred and ninety days supply of medical gowns, 200 days supply of gloves and 190 supply of P2 masks giving us one of the biggest stock piles of its kind in the world, one we are very proud of. One hundred and seventy million pieces, 9700 pallets. The stockpile itself we are investing \$120 million into. The strategy overall represents a \$357 million investment which also includes a bring forward of expenses that would've been in future years that we are buying the equipment now to have it available.

I want to thank Barbara Phillips and Jasper and her team who have put this strategy together. It was bold and ambitious and it is working they too are the kind of Health Heroes that we are celebrating this week in Health Heroes Week. We have an aspiration to also source 25 per cent of that protective equipment locally. So, it's great to have Shannon Fentiman and Glenn Butcher here to talk about the jobs impact as well as our efforts to source that locally to support local manufacturers so we can create jobs not just in warehousing, not just in hospitals but also in manufacturing. So I might ask Shannon and Glenn and then we have locals MPs, and then a nurse able to talk about what this means for frontline nurses and of course our Chief Health Officer the wonderful Dr Jeannette Young.

MINISTER FENTIMAN:

Well thank you Deputy Premier. Today's announcement, this critical reserve supply strategy is great news for Townsville. It means jobs. It means more opportunities for local Townsville businesses, local manufacturers in the supply chain who are working hard to provide this much needed PPE to our frontline Health Heroes. It is a great opportunity for us to be here to

talk to local businesses about doing business with the Queensland Government. Minister Butcher and I have just come from a round table with small businesses and we are the first state in this country to have a 25 per cent procurement target for small and medium businesses in Queensland, just like those local manufacturers who will benefit from this policy. That's \$4 billion just this year back into the hands of local small and medium businesses. And we're backing those businesses because that means local jobs. It's all part of our economic recovery plan. The Deputy Premier, our Chief Health Officer, our Premier have all managed the health response to COVID so well, and as you said this is about making sure we continue to manage that health response into the future by making sure we have got that much needed equipment. And that presents so many opportunities for local businesses to skill up the next generation of locals working in manufacturing. And this is in stark contrast to the LNP. Let's not forget right here in Townsville over 400 health workers lost their job...lost their job...150 nurses. So in a week when we are celebrating our Health Heroes, our frontline workers let's not forget their legacy. Imagine if we had not put the hard work into making sure we restored all of those frontline workers. Imagine trying to deal with a health pandemic with those cuts to health. So absolutely, while Deb Frecklington is here in Townsville tomorrow she absolutely needs to tell people here in Townsville what she is going to cut. We absolutely cannot put at risk our economic recovery plan which is backing small businesses, backing local manufacturers in supply chains, backing local jobs with an LNP government. It would absolutely mean more cuts for Townsville.

MINISTER BUTCHER:

Thank you it's great to be here today as a Manufacturing Minister in the Queensland Government. What we're seeing here today is an announcement which will see more Queensland manufacturers get a chance to fill warehouses like this with their own products. We are on the cusp here in Queensland of getting manufacturing back to where it was and bigger and better than it was before. We now have a 25 per cent procurement policy here in Queensland for our health PPE. And we know that distribution centres like this that are about to be expanded are as the Minister said \$120 million of product going in...I would love to see as Manufacturing Minister more Queensland local companies get a slice of that pie. I would love to come back here over the next few years and see Queensland products on the shelves of these distribution centres looking after our frontline staff in Queensland. This is super critical for our manufacturers here in Queensland that we now have the opportunity to do this work to get these products on the shelves. We also support those local manufacturers with a Made in Queensland policy. It's a funding grant that supports those manufacturers get to the next level where they can start to re-tool, they can start to on-shore to make sure we can get these products made locally. What is at risk though under an LNP government is that program being scrapped. We've seen what the Newman Government did to all of these great programs in Queensland. The Made for Queensland program is one of the best for manufacturers in Queensland and the last thing as Manufacturing Minister I want to see in this state is the LNP come in and destroy these fantastic grants programs that see our local manufacturers putting products on shelves just like we're seeing here today. Thank-you.

[GAP]

DR YOUNG:

Thank you to [inaudible] for that comment. It's nurses like her and all of the health staff that work in the Townsville Hospital and Health Service indeed across the state who are our heroes this week. They have kept the whole community of Queensland safe in their response and they are continuing to do that. So today in Queensland we might only have five active cases which is a fantastic effort, but we know we are going to get more cases that we have to continue to be alert and it's our health staff who are remaining alert, manning our fever clinics, who are looking out for people who present to our hospitals who might have COVID that will manage this going forward. We are in a very, very privileged position in Queensland because of the work done by so many people. We need to keep it that way. And the only way to keep it like that is for every single one of us – all 5.1 million Queenslanders if we've got any symptoms or we are worried we might have to immediately get ourselves tested and isolate ourselves. Because we don't know when this might next pop up. It's an insidious disease. It's a respiratory disease, it could hit us at any time. But if we're alert we can find that very first case and stop it from becoming an outbreak as we have done many, many times now in Queensland. Here in Townsville, they've had a total of 30 people who live in this region with COVID and each time they have managed it beautifully so you have not ended up with any major clusters in Townsville and I know they will continue to do that. So this is a really good initiative what we're seeing here – I must admit early on when this pandemic first started to spread it was very concerning whether we would have the right PPE that we needed. We never ever ran out of PPE in Queensland but it's really, really reassuring to know that we have got plenty of PPE going forward so all of our staff that need to manage patients or manage situations can have the right PPE that they need. So all of these things add up together, each thing is small or big but they all add up to create the picture that we have got here in Queensland today. Thank-you.

REPORTER:

So Jeannette, why is it safe to allow 150,000 people from northern New South Wales but not the rest of the state?

DR YOUNG:

Right. So New South Wales has done a really good response. So they had an outbreak when their borders were open to Victoria, so we know that they had some people come across and that led to their outbreak. But they're now getting that in hand. So they've had several days that they've not had a case, and indeed prior to that they'd had 14 days without a case. So they are getting on top of their current clusters, there's no doubt about that. And we've also seen that northern New South Wales has been very spared. So they've not had an outbreak. They had one early on, in Byron Bay they had a few cases there but they managed that, and since then – it's now more than a month ago – they've not had any further cases. Then another very, very important initiative that they have in place as we do in Queensland is they're testing the sewage. And we know that one person in 10,000 in a community can be picked up through sewage testing, so it's very, very sensitive. And they're testing all those northern areas along the border, and they've not found – since that outbreak in Byron Bay – they've not found any virus in the sewage there and we know that's extremely sensitive. So there's a whole lot of reasons that we can now safely open up to northern New South Wales.

We can't open up to the whole of New South Wales at this stage because there is still some outbreaks going on and some community transmission in Sydney and greater Sydney, but we hope that they will be able to get that under control very, very soon.

REPORTER:

Now that Victoria and New South Wales are almost at parity, do you consider both states a [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, because the Victorian cases are mainly community-acquired – in fact they're all community-acquired because they closed their hotels to international visitors. So they're no longer managing quarantine for people coming from overseas. New South Wales is managing enormous numbers of people coming from overseas in quarantine, so therefore you'd expect to see regular cases popping up in hotel quarantine. That's no different to here in Queensland – we're seeing the occasional case in quarantine in hotels. But they're not a concern because those people are not out and about in the community. So although the numbers might look similar between New South Wales and Victoria, they're actually very, very different.

REPORTER:

Do you know when the borders will fully reopen to New South Wales?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, at the moment we would hope that within 28 days of New South Wales not having any of those unlinked community cases we should be able to open up. The soonest that would be is towards the end of October. Now, every month in Queensland at the end of each month we review all of the situation of all of our borders and make decisions then, so I imagine we'll be making that call towards the end of October.

REPORTER:

There are places in northern New South Wales that aren't included in the border redistribution, but they haven't had cases for longer than places like Byron Bay. So why have cases like [inaudible] and Coffs Harbour been excluded?

DR YOUNG:

It's really about how far they are from the border. So the decision was made to include those places closest to the border because those people have more linkages with Queensland, in particular Brisbane, than they do with Sydney. So as you go further south you would expect the people who live there have closer linkages with Sydney. And it's Sydney that is the risk at the moment. So it's people moving between those areas and Sydney.

REPORTER:

Western Australia plans to open its border to Victoria with a [inaudible] regime in place, what do you think about that?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we haven't discussed that issue at AHPPC. So that's when all my colleagues get together. So I'll be very, very interested when we next meet to hear what their plans are and how they're going to roll those out.

REPORTER:

And just lastly, for you, what's the level of risk for outbreaks here in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

The risk really depends on what importation happens. So I think the risk of acquiring COVID within Queensland from locally transmitted cases today is very low. So the last time we saw someone infectious in the community in Queensland is the 10th of September, so I would think the risk is low. It never goes away, which is why we have to just be so alert, and if anyone has any symptoms at all it's really important no matter where they are in Queensland they come forward and get tested. We do know that people do cross our borders, for instance people with freight. I mean, we wouldn't be able to fill up this warehouse here if we didn't have that continuing freight movement from elsewhere in the country. So we know there's a risk there, but we manage that risk. We also know that there's a risk that, although someone's been in quarantine for 14 days, you can still – it's very low risk, but it's there – you can still develop the infection after that. And most recently we've seen that happen in New Zealand where people went through the 14 days quarantine, were appropriately discharged from quarantine, totally well, no symptoms, and then a few days later developed symptoms. So there's always that ongoing risk. This is a virus – it's mainly spread through the air, so it can continue to spread. That's why people need to be alert. So the risk never ever goes away, but we're nine months in now – Queenslanders across the state have managed this very well. We've had different, very small waves as we've gone through but each time it's been managed.

REPORTER:

Steven, a couple of questions for you if that's alright? Just on that new testing, COVID testing, I suppose, technology that's been trialled at the moment. I think it's sort of like a pregnancy test [inaudible].

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I'm aware of it and I think it's very, very exciting. You know, Queensland hasn't just led the world in the health response, our researchers are leading the world in the race for a vaccine, in the race for a treatment, as well as implementing new and innovative testing regimes. We got testing up and running here in Queensland at the start incredibly quickly. We now have, I think, four different testing platforms, allowing us a great range of ways of testing for the virus in different locations, doing it very quickly, as well as sequencing different strains of the virus. And this new test, I understand, is a very, very fast turnaround test. And if proven to be effective it could be incredibly useful, particularly for critical workers who at the moment when they need to quarantine awaiting for a test result, they are not available to us to do the important work that they do. So for example, when one of our ED nurses has a symptom they have to go and get tested of course, then they have to stay home and wait for

that result. Now, in some locations we are turning those results around in 12, 14, 18 hours. Sometimes when we are at peaks of our testing, when we hit that peak around 20,000 the wait time went to more than 30 hours. Now that is still pretty good, but it means that that individual won't be available for the time in which they wait for those results. So if we can find a way to test much more rapidly, that will allow us to get people back to work, back out of the quarantine back to work sooner doing the important work that they do.

REPORTER:

Would it replace conventional testing?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I don't think it would necessarily replace conventional testing. And what we have found is that it is useful for us to have a range of different testing platforms, but what I understand the advantage of this particular one would be just how quickly it could be turned around.

REPORTER:

And it is being developed in Queensland as well. How good is that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That's right. Being developed in Queensland with support from the Queensland Government from our innovation funding. It is fantastic to see Queensland leading the world. In some ways we are able to do that because our health response has been so good. Other countries, where people have had to stay away from work, can't go about their usual business, they haven't been able to advance their research in the same way as we have in Queensland. And I think that stands us in incredibly good stead. I know we are already being sought out as a host site for a range of clinical trials for diseases other than COVID, because of course researchers around the world are continuing to trial all sorts of treatments and vaccines, and the fact that we are currently basically COVID-free means that we are able to do those trials. And it also means that our fantastic researchers are getting on with the job of looking for vaccines and treatments and new testing techniques.

REPORTER:

With regards to the elderly woman on the Sunshine Coast who remains unnamed and identified for more than three weeks. Has Queensland Health put an application for [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I'm not across the details of that individual case. I'm happy to get you some information.

REPORTER:

Is Jeannette Young across it?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Is it COVID-related or...?

REPORTER:

No. She was an elderly woman. She was just found left outside the hospital.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Right.

DR YOUNG:

I remember that case, but I am not across it.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No. We'll have to get you some information from the health service.

REPORTER:

On this announcement, is the new site of the warehouse here or somewhere else?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It is probably going to be somewhere else. We'll now go to the market to identify an appropriate location. We'll take into account what is available, a suitable place in terms of transport logistics – that kind of thing. But that is the work that will now happen now that we have committed this investment.

REPORTER:

And is there a timeline for how long it takes to build?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No. That will depend on what site is chosen, whether it is refitting an existing facility, or building a whole new one. And so we'll have more to say about that of course, more announcements as we get to the very exciting point of cutting a ribbon on that new distribution centre.

REPORTER:

How much will it cost?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So the new distribution centre here in Townsville alone will cost \$12.6 million we expect to build. That is how much we have allocated out of that total package of \$357 million. And we will invest \$7 million in operating it. It is important to note that it will service a much wider part of the state. Our intention is for all of these locations to operate as hubs and for us to supply our health services from the most appropriate location based on current supply as well as supply chain. So there won't be geographic boundary around each of them. We will be able to work across them to make sure we are always getting stock to our hospitals and other health facilities as quickly as we can.

REPORTER:

And is this contingent on Labor winning the election, or will it happen anyway?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

This is investment from the Queensland Health budget. It is a decision of government. Of course the LNP could reverse it. It could be part of the cuts that they plan to make. I would urge them to support it though. I would urge you all to ask if they will support it. It is though a decision of government and it would need to be reversed by an incoming government. It would need to be a decision to cut it from Deb Frecklington.

REPORTER:

How many jobs will it create?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

So I don't have a specific job number, and again, that will depend on whether we are building a whole new facility or refitting and existing one. There will be though more jobs both in the construction, but also in the operation of the facility.

REPORTER:

And with manufacturing, we've sort of spoken a lot about that in the presser, has lack of storage [inaudible] manufacturing opportunities in Townsville?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No so much. But what the stockpile has allowed us to do is to negotiate with local providers larger contracts at a single point in time, which has made it more viable for them to look at what they can invest into equipment, into varying what they produce. And so certainly that bringing forward of expenditure has given us new contracting opportunities to provide some more certainty to local businesses who might think about investing.

REPORTER:

Just on questions on Olive Downs. Did the government know before approving the mine that it was still before the courts?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, I understand that the Premier announced yesterday that that mine would proceed. It is a \$1 billion project supporting 1500 jobs. I am not, as you might expect, across the legal details of each and every mining project. I have enough to do dealing with COVID and the health system. But the decision to approve that mine will create lots and lots of jobs in Queensland, and that is what we are about as we go about the economic recovery here in Queensland. We want to unite and recover and get more people back to work.

REPORTER:

New Hope, who did the New Acland mine, have accused the Premier of having double standards. Do you agree with that statement?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, again, I am not across the differences in the legal situation of those two. We are very pleased to support the mine that was approved yesterday. That other project has been before the courts for a very, very long time. We have had a very consistent position throughout, that we would await the outcome of those court proceedings, and that is what we continue to do. And no doubt, preparations are underway for whatever the outcome of that court proceeding is. Alright. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

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

Date: 1 October 2020

Duration: 23 minutes 42 seconds

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Of course, it's a beautiful day again in Queensland, and no new cases of COVID-19 which is exactly what we want to see. Of course, with an increase in overseas arrivals we would expect to see some cases over coming weeks but they should, if all goes well, be in hotel quarantine. We did 5758 tests, underlining just how great it is that Queenslanders are still coming forward and getting tested at that rate that we hope for even though there are very, very low levels of respiratory illness out there. We remain at six deaths from COVID-19 in Queensland on the day that Victoria now has had 800 deaths. It's the 1st of October which means that the border zone extension is now in place, as well as the loosening on restrictions for the density of people who can be dining and drinking outdoors at COVID Safe venues. And I understand that the Defence Force is no longer providing support to our police on those borders, although of course we still welcome the support they're providing for hotel quarantine. There has been another result of positive virus found in the sewage in Cannonvale. Again, it's nothing to be particularly concerned about. It could be related to that positive result we saw last month. But as a precaution and to ensure that we maintain high testing rates there, the fever clinic at Airlie Beach will be stood up once again.

We have just visited Jacaranda Place, a truly wonderful new facility for young Queenslanders experiencing mental illness. It's a residential in-patient facility, as well as day programs, as well as a school, and it's right now providing care and support to 12 in-patients and 18 people on the day program. They are from right throughout the state. The service here supports young people from right around the state. And you cannot get a better symbol of the difference between the Palaszczuk Government and the LNP than this place. Of course, this was a replacement for the Barratt Centre that the LNP so cruelly closed in their cuts just to save money, and as a result lives were lost, lives that could have been saved. And it's lives like those that are being saved right now at Jacaranda Place. We are just so proud of our \$42 million dollar investment there. It's a beautiful facility and it's delivering wonderful care. We were there to thank the staff. It's Health Heroes Week, and the staff, no matter what they do in Queensland Health, they're all heroes, and the staff there who are providing not just mental health support but music therapy, art therapy, as well as the teachers at the school, they do just a fantastic job and we appreciate and thank them so much. The coffee that I wanted to hold up for you was made for me by one of the young people there, not just receiving treatment but getting his certificate as a barista. And it's exactly that kind of holistic wraparound support – there's no other facility quite like it in the world, and Queensland and

Queenslanders should be very proud of the fact that we have been able to rebuild that to replace a facility cruelly closed by Deb Frecklington and the LNP. The Prince Charles Hospital, which Jacaranda Place is situated on the campus of, is one of our best hospitals. It's a fantastic hospital already, but the growth in the northside means we know we need to expand it. We are seeing increased presentations for all of the services that they offer as well as the emergency department. And so today we are announcing that we will invest in expanding the Prince Charles Hospital. We're committing \$3 million dollars to the planning process which will deliver a refurbishment to parts of the existing facility, an expansion to the hospital buildings and an expanded emergency department. This is what this Government does – we build, we expand, we refurbish health facilities so that we can deliver more and better health services to Queensland and to Queenslanders so that we can support our health workers, our health heroes in the incredible work that they do. Not a single planning project like this was undertaken in the three years that the LNP were in power, and now of course we have construction underway on those two major expansions that we began planning in 2015 – that's at Caboolture and at Logan. More than \$1 billion dollars being invested in those two facilities alone. I'm going to ask Bart and Jimmy and Danielle to say something briefly about what this hospital means to the community, and then Jeannette Young, the Chief Health Officer, is here to talk COVID. Thank you.

[Local Labor candidates make speeches]

DR YOUNG:

So, no new cases in Queensland overnight and we haven't had an infectious case in the community since the 10th of September. So that means it is time to remove some of the restrictions that have been in place, and for all of Queensland to get outside and really enjoy our beautiful weather, our beautiful climate. So, as of 1.00am this morning, people can now gather outside in a higher density – one person per two square metres – and can larger groups – up to 1000 people in an event with a checklist. So that's really important as we go through to Christmas. Then the other change is we can now have 75 per cent of people in seated stadiums or outdoor auditoriums or wherever we meet outside and can have large events and manage those. So all of those things can be done because we've not had any community transmission for so long in Queensland. We also, though, know now what to do if we do have a case – because we are going to get more cases. That's inevitable. Across the world we're well over 30 million cases, over a million deaths, so we will see cases come into Queensland in the future. But we know how to manage them. We know what we need to do. So we can, very rapidly, respond but not have to close everything down as we had to do back in March because we've now got those systems in place. So that's a really good position for us to be in as we go into summer here in Queensland. We know that respiratory disease is less likely to spread in summer as well, so it puts us in a good position. Thank you.

REPORTER:

You mentioned Christmas, is that a... I guess, a warning that there's likely to be no further easing of restrictions [inaudible] up until...?

DR YOUNG:

No, no. No, it isn't. It's just this is a start as we move towards preparing for Christmas so people can have some surety about preparing for larger events. So we know a lot of people organise special events this time of year, whether it be fates, whether it be carols, whether it be all sorts of things – so people have some assurance that they can safely organise them in the future.

REPORTER:

Is it likely that we might that [inaudible] Christmas? I know a lot of people have extended families [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I think we will see further changes as we move towards the latter part of the year. It really depends on what we see happening with those numbers. But the big issue, I think, is it's unlikely that we'll go backwards, so I think that's the important message to get out there.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, that case in Sydney in last week that seems like it was community transmission – the New South Wales Chief Health Officer thinks it's probably linked to the cluster at Liverpool Hospital and said it's now up to Queensland's health authorities to decide whether or not that was a case of community transmission. Do you consider it to be one?

DR YOUNG:

The information that she shared with us at the time would suggest it is most likely to be community transmission. So a bit like we had that case that I'm sure was related to those three young women who went down to Melbourne, but I never found the actual person that was involved. So yes, I'm almost certain it was related, but I can't be absolutely definitive. So I suspect it's a similar sort of situation for New South Wales.

REPORTER:

So in terms of the border block, we will be treating it as a case of community transmission?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Yes.

REPORTER:

And just on that, we know... well from my understanding, most people are from infectious or [inaudible] from the infection during the first 14 days after they contract the virus...

DR YOUNG:

No...

REPORTER:

...not in the back half of that 14 to 28 days.

DR YOUNG:

The most infectious period is the three days before you have any symptoms. So...

REPORTER:

I mean, like, from the 14 to the 28 days the risk of actually spreading the infection is quite low, is that right?

DR YOUNG:

It depends whether you find all the cases. I do say where you're going, Lydia. That was our problem. If you remember we had those five cases relating to the three young women who went down to Melbourne, and then we had a gap and that gap wasn't long enough because we clearly had some spread that we hadn't picked up that led to that next cluster at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. So that's why we use 28 days to pick up because you frequently will miss one of those generations of transmission.

REPORTER:

And other epidemiologists and virologists have said that 28 days is – you know, if you're for suppression that's a very safe measure... sorry, if you're going for eradication. If you're going for suppression then 14 days is probably safe enough. How come we are going for this 28 days rather than 14?

DR YOUNG:

Well 28 days was what we discussed at a national level as being the safest amount of time to allow. So here in Queensland, I'm using 14 days – but that's 14 days since we had someone infectious in the community. So that's an even stronger test before we then move restrictions. So with the borders, because people don't necessarily capture that information about when a case was last infectious in the community, we're using the 28 days of no unlinked cases.

REPORTER:

So in Queensland for our internal restrictions we're using 14 days, but for the borders we're doing 28 days because that was nationally agreed to?

DR YOUNG:

No, but they're two totally different measures. Right? The 14 days in Queensland is about having a case in the community that's infectious. So our last unlinked case in Queensland is the first one in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre cluster – so that's many, many months ago. Right? Our last time that we had someone actually out and about in the community infectious, potentially spreading the virus, was on the 10th of September. So, with New South Wales, their last unlinked case is that one that we just recently had. When they've last had someone infectious in the community, I don't have that detail.

REPORTER:

With that, given they're obviously working to try and link that case, if they do then link it to the hospital, what would be the definitive answer you require so that that's not day zero of the border block [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Well, the nationally agreed discussion was that it needed to be linked within 48 hours and we're beyond that timeframe now. So it's about easily linking a case. So as I said, we, I think, have linked our Brisbane Youth Detention cluster to the Melbourne-Logan cluster, but it took us a long time to get that linkage because we had to wait for genome sequencing, we had to wait for all of the epidemiology, etcetera. etcetera. That's why I don't think, in that clarification, that they were linked.

REPORTER:

Right. So they [inaudible] 48 hours, even if you found out a week later, at that stage [inaudible].

DR YOUNG:

Yep.

REPORTER:

On that 28 days. Back on the 3rd of September you said that if the 28-day period is achieved then that triggers the border to reopen. Since then, you tend to have [inaudible] decision later in the month, so have you changed your views?

DR YOUNG:

No, the process has always been to review at the end of each month.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] 28 days would trigger [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Well it triggers a discussion, absolutely.

REPORTER:

It triggers a discussion.

DR YOUNG:

Yes. And then the decision is made at the end of the month.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Triggers a discussion.

REPORTER:

How many days are we at now? What's the border clock sitting at?

DR YOUNG:

So the 28 days would be triggered on the 22nd of September. October, sorry. October. Thank you for picking that up, yes.

REPORTER:

And on that, that [inaudible] that were to happen in caretaker mode with the Government. I know ultimately [inaudible] executive powers to open the border, but given you'll be in caretaker mode [inaudible]. Does not making this decision before we go into caretaker mode [inaudible] New South Wales in October as is?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I don't think Queenslanders would want us to take much notice of the beginning of caretaker or indeed the election when making decisions about their health. We'll continue to make them, as we have been, based on the health advice. We continue to be the Government right through to election day. Nothing substantial changes because we have consistently offered the Leader of the Opposition briefings with the Chief Health Officer right through out this pandemic and will continue to do so right up until the election. That's the caretaker convention, but we've been following that convention for quite some time now.

REPORTER:

Can you explain how, like, it would work at the end of the month when we hit... because the border review happens like a couple of weeks before October 31, will it be, like, you guys and Deb and Dr Young in a room having a chat, or will Dr Young just make a decision and notify both of you? Like, how will it actually work?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No. Look, we've sought and had detailed advice on how the caretaker convention applies. We continue to be the Government throughout that period. We'll continue to work with the Chief Health Officer and we'll continue to offer briefings to the Leader of the Opposition whenever she wants them, whenever she wants them throughout that period. Clearly, if there are decisions that are made by the Chief Health Officer during that period, we will make that offer and if she will like to have those briefings we will provide them. But I think it's important that we continue to do as we have done, take the best possible health advice, put the best interests of Queenslanders first and that's regardless of where we're at with the electoral cycle.

REPORTER:

There's more criticism from New South Wales this morning that the border closures were putting politics before people. Given that case has now been linked back, should the border reopen?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I think it's important we continue to use the health advice that Dr Young has outlined. It's only today that we've expanded that border zone. Let's see how that goes. Clearly there are still active cases in Sydney. It's important... because the real test there is how easily it can be linked, and if you can't link it within 48 hours then it's difficult to know

then what other risks were about. That's what the discussion and agreement was nationally. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister rejected that paper and didn't allow it to be considered by the National Cabinet – but it was considered by all of the country's chief health and medical officers, and so I think Queenslanders would want us to stick with it. I also want to say, Peter Dutton's been on radio today again representing the LNP's position that all of our borders should be open, that our borders should be completely open. And while some people might have questions about New South Wales, I think nearly everyone agrees that our border with Victoria should be closed. New South Wales has its border with Victoria closed. And so it's pretty out of line for Peter Dutton to be running around criticising us again for having in place policies to keep our borders closed to Victoria. If you've got your borders closed with Victoria then you need some kind of border restrictions in place, and we'll continue to do so.

REPORTER:

Sorry, just on that New South Wales one. On the 22nd of October if you were to reach that 28-day situation with New South Wales, as the criteria for the CHO says, a discussion – in your mind if we hit the 22nd of October, there's no unlinked cases in New South Wales, would the border open?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Look, that's a hypothetical scenario. You saw last time that you all invented a border clock, and then the clock was reset because there was an unlinked case. And so we do need to, obviously, get through that period. But let me say how this has happened every other time – around that point in time, around the 22nd, kind of a week or so in advance of the end of the month, we've started discussions about the border. We've, wherever possible, tried to give people notice about when changes would come into effect and then they've come into effect at the end of the month. There is actually a quite detailed process that sits behind all of that, and we need to give our police and our policy makers time to get all of that in place. Where we haven't given people time, you've all criticised us for being rushed and not being ready. And so that's the process that we've been going through. It seems to have been working. It's gone pretty smoothly this morning – I understand the wait at the border peaked at just 30 minutes. That's a lot better than other times we've made these kinds of changes.

REPORTER:

So hypothetically, it would be November 1? If we reach that on October 22, the [inaudible] 1.00am November 1?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah, that's the process that we've just been through, in fact. 1.00am this morning, the 1st of October. If that scenario was to happen, that's what you should expect.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, it clearly it wasn't. And I'd like to read a statement. Departments don't run the Government. Departments provide fearless and frank advice, but Ministers are not in a position to just willy-nilly accept them. That's not me saying that. That's what Jarrod Bleijie said when he completely overruled a tender decision of his Department to award the bootcamp contract to someone he didn't like. So the LNP really has no credibility on this. That's 100 per cent of a decision. I understand Minister de Brenni asked for revision of just 1 per cent of these decisions, and he did so because the policies hadn't been properly followed and he wanted to ensure that the funds went to the most needy clubs, not the wealthiest clubs who could afford to employ the best consultants to write their grant applications.

REPORTER:

So do you think it was appropriate that he spruiked two grants he chose [inaudible]?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, all of us promote the work that the Government does in our electorates.

REPORTER:

And what do you say, I guess, to those clubs that didn't get grants because Mick de Brenni intervened?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I'm not across the intimate detail of it. I know that many of them have since got those grants. But the important thing here is that the Minister acted to ensure that the grants went to the most appropriate clubs.

REPORTER:

On the hospital, how many more beds are we talking about?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Yeah, we're not yet at that level of detail. That's what this planning is designed to do, to analyse the demand going forward and make sure that we build a fit for purpose building. These buildings, they last us for 30, 40, 50 years so it's really important that we get it right, that we build in capacity for future growth, that kind of thing. So that planning process will now be able to start. Thanks everyone.

[ENDS]



Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference, Herston

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

Date: 2 October 2020

Duration: 27 minutes 45 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

So first of all, good morning Queensland. Good morning Brisbane. So today I can report that we have two cases of COVID, but we are absolutely fine with them because they were in quarantine and the two people are in hospital. They were on-board a ship, and Dr Young will explain a little bit more about that. That means we have 16 active cases. Our total number of cases is 1160, and included in that number is a historical case which happened ages ago but has been added to the total, which means we have also had over 5200 tests in the last 24 hours.

Well today, we are very pleased to be here at Herston. I think it was about two years ago we were turning the sod here on the STARS, which is the Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service. It is due to open next year. I am getting a sneak peak today with the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Education, and the Chief Health Officer. And what this means, is it means more beds and more surgeries. That is exactly what we want for Queenslanders and Queensland families. And there will be five operating theatres and another two operating theatres by June. So this is wonderful news. This is a fantastic precinct and I am very pleased that the government has been able to ensure that this happens, and we want to see more surgeries happen and those extra beds – 182 beds. And it brings together surgery, rehabilitation and outpatient services, which is exactly what families need when we are looking after their health and we are keeping Queenslanders safe.

Now today, some more good news. And we have now put together a roadmap which takes us to the end of the year and we're going to talk about easing some more restrictions. Now, the reason we can ease the restrictions is because Queenslanders have done a brilliant job. I want to thank all of the families out there, all of Queenslanders, for doing the right thing. Keep up the great work. But we just remember, too, if you're sick stay at home and get tested. So, what does that mean? So from 4:00 o'clock this afternoon, in some great news and in breaking news, you will be able to stand up inside and outside, whether it's at a cafe, restaurant or a bar, and have a drink. Now there's only one proviso. We want people to make sure that they are keeping up with their social distancing. But this is something that the communities have been saying to me. I've been travelling this week out at Moranbah, out up to Cairns as well, and I love to see people enjoying the lifestyle. And the only reason we can

do this is because Queenslanders have done a great job. And I want to thank Dr Young because Dr Young has provided us with that health advice, which enables us to do that

Secondly, we have made it very clear that our borders have kept us safe. We are looking very closely at New South Wales and if they do not have any community transmission for 28 days, we said very clearly that at the end of the month, we review the plans and that would mean there may be a possibility of opening up to New South Wales if there is no community transmission. But, of course, their health experts are also concerned about some undetected community transmission at the moment. They're about to go into school holidays. So we'll be watching that space very carefully, and Dr Young will be watching that space very carefully.

In some other good news too, so Stage 5 from 1:00am on the 1st of November would also mean that gatherings of up to 40 people in homes and public spaces across Queensland and up to 40 people would be able to dance at weddings. We're not going to choose those 40 people. The weddings themselves will have to choose those 40 people at any one time. And then of course we have Stage 6 from 1:00am on the 1st of December – gatherings of up to 50 people and, of course, the increase of the number of attendees permitted outside with those COVID-safe events, and unlimited dancing at weddings with a COVID-safe plan.

So these are the issues that people have been raising with us and because of the great response that Queenslanders have had, we've been able to act on the health advice. And, of course, it does depend, too, on making sure that we don't have any community transmission. If we do have some community transmission on the roadmap, it says there what would happen – gatherings would be reduced in homes, there'd be increased testing, wearing of masks and, of course, Dr Young would take those steps that are necessary in relation to places with a disability and hospitals where PPE would have to be worn.

So I hope this gives Queenslanders confidence to get out there and enjoy their state. We've been able to do things more in Queensland because we have taken those proactive steps. We have kept Queenslanders safe, and that means now that Queenslanders can enjoy Queensland even more. I'll hand over to the Deputy Premier and then the Chief Health Officer.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thanks so much, Premier. Well we have three pieces of wonderful news today. Of course the first is that we have just those two new cases. Both were maritime crew – one a man in his 20s and the other a man in his 30s – and I think it underlines just how effective our industry COVID-safe plans have been. They've allowed us to continue with maritime freight, with road freight while also keeping our community safe. They're now being treated at the PA Hospital and our contact tracers are working to identify whether there is anyone at risk from those cases. It means we now have six active cases. We did 5256 tests in the last testing period, which is fantastic.

The second piece of good news is that from 4:00pm today in Queensland will be Happy Hour. We'll be able to again stand at the bar and have a drink, again stand at a restaurant or a cafe and have a snack. I want to shout out to our hospo workers. They've done a really fantastic job and this seated restriction has been one of the hardest for them to enforce. It's been really important though. It's enforced social distancing. But it has been hard on our

hospitality workers and this will make their job a lot easier and will also make going out a lot more fun.

That is part of, this announcement, is part of our brand-new roadmap taking us through Stages 4, 5 and 6 as we continue to ease restrictions here in Queensland. This is only possible because we've been so successful at limiting transmission. It's only possible because we managed to get on top of that those recent clusters here in the Brisbane and Ipswich metropolitan areas. It's designed to give Queenslanders and businesses some certainty about where we're heading, a sense of exactly where we are heading with restrictions. Of course, things might change, but these roadmaps have been very effective and very welcome in the past. And we've always said that our health response is the foundation of our economic response. It is the first and necessary step of getting our economy open, getting businesses open again and getting people back to work, which is, of course our focus.

Today we've reached practical completion on STARS. So welcome to Queensland's newest public hospital building. This was a \$340 million investment, delivering an additional 182 beds to what is already recognised worldwide as one of the world's biggest and best hospital campuses. We will add seven theatres all-up, three new endoscopy suites, two new CT scanners, two new x-rays and an MRI machine, allowing us to do, literally, thousands more procedures here at the RBWH within Metro North. Once the fit-out is complete, we'll begin doing those surgeries in February 2021. There'll be, all-up, and once we've fully ramped up, about 900 new frontline staff here delivering those surgeries. It is fantastic! It is just fantastic. As you can see, cutting-edge, world-class, new health facility.

It's one that we wouldn't have if this government were not elected in 2015. Campbell Newman and Deb Frecklington were planning to sell this precinct for a private hospital and for a residential apartment development. We were elected. We stopped that sale and we've been able to deliver this fantastic, new public hospital facility as well as a range of other developments that will now progressively open on this site. It underlines how governments matter. It underlines how who you elect matters. If Campbell Newman had been re-elected in 2015, we would not be standing here in this new public hospital building. And if Deb Frecklington were to be elected Premier, we would not see new public hospital facilities like this. We would see cuts to public hospital services, cuts to nurses, just like we did the last time the LNP were elected.

DR YOUNG:

So we had two new cases overnight in Queensland. Both of them were crew that were due to go on to a vessel off the coast of Brisbane, from the Port of Brisbane. And as part of the protocol they went from the airport, when they arrived into Queensland, into hotel quarantine, were tested in hotel quarantine while they were awaiting to go and join their vessel. Those tests came back positive late yesterday. So immediately we organised, instead, they did go out to the vessel but we've organised for them to be transferred to the PA Hospital where they currently are. We're just working through whether they've had contact with anyone else. Their protocols are very rigid and they were followed, so we think the risk is very low but, of course, we're working that through. So there were two different vessels that had crew changeovers from that flight that came in to Brisbane. So we're just holding both those vessels at the moment while we work out whether there's anything further that needs to be

done. And working out whether there's any other people who have potentially been infected. That is all being worked through with MSQ of course. They have arranged all of this, as per the protocols that we have in place. So the risk there to the general community of Queensland is minimal, but of course we are just confirming all of that. We did have one other historical case that someone who acquired the infection many, many months ago and was picked up on serology. So that has been added into our numbers, but of course it happened many months ago so it is not a concern now. We've had no other cases linked to that Brisbane Youth Detention Centre cluster or the academy cluster, so that all looks like that has been settled, which is very good.

But we do need to continue to be cautious, as people have been, because we are going to get these sorts of cases, although they are being managed very well. And as per protocols we can't stop totally from entering Queensland. We know that. So that is why it so important that if anyone has any symptoms, no matter how unlikely you think it might be COVID, it could be so please just come forward and get tested, as all of those people did yesterday. It is really good to see the large numbers of Queenslanders who come forward each day and get tested, just to be certain. The turnaround time is quite reasonable. It is well within 24 hours, so it means that you just need to isolate until you get that result. And that is very, very important as we go forward.

So because of all of the testing that Queenslanders have been doing, showing that we don't have community transmission in Queensland, and because we have got all of those systems in place we can remove quite a number of those restrictions, which is really good. The last cluster that we ended up with those 55 cases in total shows that we can keep Queensland going forward and being managed without having to close it down. So you would all have seen that overseas, unfortunately, as they are going into winter they are seeing more and more cases, so they are having to close their communities and put all those restrictions back in place. That doesn't need to happen in Queensland. If people keep on coming forward and get tested, and if people keep on managing that social distancing as much as they can, we can keep things moving forward here in Queensland.

So that is what has happened here. People can now stand when they go out and about, still within that one per four square metres indoors, unless you are in a very small venue. But one per two square metres outdoors. But you can stand. And that is important as we go to Christmas, because we know that people like having parties and nibbles and those sorts of things. So people can get together, that's really important as we move forward. Plus we have already seen the increased numbers who can come together, and we are going to trial dancing and see how that goes at weddings. We are capping it at 40 just to see how that works. But it can be any 40. So we just want a maximum of 40 people out on the dance floor at any point in time and see how that works so that we can look at whether there is other places we could start looking at dancing again.

So all of these things are signs that we have got this virus under control in Queensland. We've still got to do certain things – very, very, very important things – but we can, if we continue to do those things, we can continue to loosen those restrictions.

REPORTER:

So you can only stand for a drink or a meal at outdoor venues?

DR YOUNG:

No, no. Indoors, outdoors, anywhere. Anywhere that has got a COVID-safe plan. So you can do what you like of course in your own home, and you can now do that with 40 people. So that's your own home. But if you are out and about in a commercial-type venue that has got a COVID-safe plan or a checklist, yes you can stand to eat or drink.

REPORTER:

Why were these two crew members allowed to go the ship if they tested positive?

DR YOUNG:

That is the protocol, that we need to keep freight going. So they need to be separate from the general community, so when they arrive into the airport they immediately need to go into hotel quarantine or to their ship. So if there is a delay between when their ship arrives into port – so they can't go immediately from the airport to the ship – they go into a hotel. And then part of the process is that they get tested when they are in the hotel.

REPORTER:

So they were waiting for the ship [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

They were waiting for the ship, yes.

REPORTER:

Just on the individual who had the historic case [inaudible], can you just tell us where that person was located and how it came out that they had the virus?

DR YOUNG:

A lot of people are just going to see their GP and are interested because they have been overseas or they've been involved in a cluster or whatever the reason. They just want to know whether or not they have had COVID. So we are doing a lot of that – we're not, but the private sector in the main, the private pathology sector is doing it and they are picking up these cases. So they get added to our total, but it happened many, many months ago so it is not an issue.

REPORTER:

Where are we at with the 28-day matrix for opening to New South Wales? How many days along are we?

DR YOUNG:

So there last case was the... Now I'm getting caught up.

REPORTER:

Community case or [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yeah. So it's when they have a case that they are not able to immediately link to one of their known clusters. So it is unlinked cases.

REPORTER:

So you don't know how many days along [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We're nowhere near that 28 days because they just had one fairly recently.

REPORTER:

So October 22?

DR YOUNG:

Yeah.

REPORTER:

Would you mind talking us through the science of the transmission that comes from dancing and why you picked that number of 40?

DR YOUNG:

Right. The reason I've recommended 40 is because 40 people can gather in their own home, so it makes sense that 40 people can gather in a wedding closely. That's the reason.

REPORTER:

And is the... [inaudible] would you mind just talking us through, is it the sweat, like, what is it?

DR YOUNG:

It's just the closeness. Because you're not going to... I mean, it would be nice if people wished to dance 1.5 metres apart, that's fine, but people aren't if we're genuine about it. So we're allowing 40 people in their own home to gather closely, so it just makes sense to allow them to do that on the dancefloor at a wedding because they're people they know – I mean, these are their friends, their family that they've invited. They're the people they have a lot of interaction with normally, so it makes sense that they can do that at a wedding.

REPORTER:

You've probably been asked this in the last few days – is there any chance in the world that we can open to New South Wales before November 1?

DR YOUNG:

There's always chances. But at this point in time, the process is that we look at all of the information and one factor is whether they've had any unlinked community transmission for 28 days. But there are a lot of other factors we look at. We look at what sewage testing

they've been doing, we look at what testing of their community, how many people, we look at the restrictions they've got in place. So there's a whole range of things that we look at, and we look at them all at the end of the month and make a decision.

REPORTER:

And November 1 seems to be the best hope, correct?

DR YOUNG:

That's our usual protocol, yes – to look at it at the end of the month and then put it in place the first day of the month.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, back in July when the bars first reopened and people were allowed sit it up, that rule was revoked because you were worried about people mixing too much, what's changed?

DR YOUNG:

We don't have any community transmission. If you remember, that's when we started having those three young women who went down to Melbourne and came back, and I was very worried about the risks then. And we've had a lot of infectious days in the community. We ended up having up to 130 infectious days in the community when we got to that peak, so it was a really big concern. I am genuinely amazed, although I shouldn't be because we've got such fantastic health staff out there, but I am amazed that we restricted that most recent cluster to 55. I genuinely did think it was going to be a lot worse than that.

REPORTER:

If people are standing up [inaudible] why is it so bad if they just [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I'm not sure what the definition of dancing is. I think if someone is standing up and wiggling their hips, that's fine Lydia.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It's about the close interaction. It's really about getting close with someone. Particularly when we think about some venues where there are a lot of people who don't know each other, they wouldn't normally interact with them – that's why we want to start this with weddings where people genuinely do know each other.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] numbers of who's on the dancefloor, or will it?

DR YOUNG:

I'm sure that people will do that properly.

REPORTER:

I think the dance ban's going to be reviewed on December 1. Is there any chance we could see people being allowed to see people being allowed to dance at bars and whatnot by Christmas time?

DR YOUNG:

I don't know. Let's trial this first. Let's do one step at a time and see what the outcome of that is before we then move on.

REPORTER:

But there's hope?

DR YOUNG:

There's always hope.

REPORTER:

One more for Dr Young. I just note on here as well that Victoria's obviously very much still in the red here. What's your best guess or best estimate for when you might look at even talking about opening that border?

DR YOUNG:

Well it really depends how they go. They have a lot of very, very severe restrictions in place, so that's stopping that spread at the moment. So when they start removing those restrictions, that's when we'll get a really good feel about how much community transmission there is.

REPORTER:

Would you look at something like what WA has implemented with allowing exemptions to Victorians to travel here with protocols around testing?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, and quarantine. So we have that in place already in Queensland. We do allow Victorians to come into Queensland if there are certain conditions there, and they quarantine and get tested.

REPORTER:

But not... for example, a Victorian wanting to come up to watch the grand final – I was of the understanding that just a private individual wanting to visit the state would not be allowed the option of quarantining.

DR YOUNG:

Not at the moment, because we have so many people wanting to come from Victoria and we don't have the capacity to manage that.

REPORTER:

So when would you look at easing restrictions around that, maybe with a system like what WA has, for example?

DR YOUNG:

When we've seen the outcomes when they remove their internal restrictions. So today in Victoria you cannot travel out of Melbourne into the regions because they are trying to stop spread from Melbourne to regional Victoria, so why would we open and risk spread from Melbourne to Queensland. Internally, they're worried about it in Victoria.

REPORTER:

Premier, a couple of things...

PREMIER:

Yeah, sure. And just going back to that last question, too – the Western Australian exemptions are very narrow and they're just catching up with what the exemptions are across other states at the moment.

REPORTER:

Caretaker mode on Monday or Tuesday. The Virgin deal has not been signed. Will you have that signed? Given the LNP has said they won't direct that money towards a Virgin deal, will you have that signed before Monday?

PREMIER:

I will have to check with the Treasurer where that is at, but let me make it very clear – we support the regional jobs that Virgin brings. And if you're talking about growing the Queensland economy and backing the regions, we need Virgin. And part of that deal is about having the headquarters remain here in Queensland.

REPORTER:

But you'll need that signed this weekend, correct?

PREMIER:

I'll doublecheck with the Treasurer. But there's a lot at risk coming up this election, so I hope people take the time to actually think about this. I'll have a lot more to say about it early next week, but this is going to be a very, very important election where every single vote will count.

REPORTER:

And why was Adani given an indefinite deferral on their royalties?

PREMIER:

This is nothing new. The Government has been working on this, the Treasurer has signed off on that, and as we said every cent needs to be paid back with interest. And it's no different to any other major resource project in Queensland.

REPORTER:

How long is the deferral?

PREMIER:

I don't have that information. The Treasurer has that.

REPORTER:

Is that good enough, Premier, to just say to Queenslanders "trust us it's a good deal, but you don't need to know the details"?

PREMIER:

It's done with every single other mining company.

REPORTER:

This is only the second royalties' deferral though, so...

PREMIER:

Yep, but that's an option for mining companies and, you know, this is all about jobs at the end of the day. But that's... I mean, you'll have to ask the Treasurer the exact specifics.

REPORTER:

Is what Mick de Brenni did a rort?

PREMIER:

Well the Auditor-General didn't say that.

REPORTER:

But do you think it is?

PREMIER:

Well, where did the Auditor-General say that, Domani?

REPORTER:

But when you go...

PREMIER:

No, you've got the document. Where did it say that?

REPORTER:

If you look at how many of those...

PREMIER:

It was about 50-50. It was about 50-50.

REPORTER:

...of the Labor electorates, though. He intervened in quite a few.

PREMIER:

It's about 50-50.

REPORTER:

Okay. And did you know before announcing the Olives Downs mine on Tuesday that it was still before the courts?

PREMIER:

No, let me make it very clear that we have ticked off on the approval processes for that mine to commence construction. There is, I think, from memory, one or two further leases which is about expansion in nine years' time. So it's ready to go. I find it unbelievable that people are criticising a project that's going to bring 1000 jobs for regional Queensland.

REPORTER:

But did you know it was still before the courts?

PREMIER:

Not all of it is. That's not correct.

REPORTER:

It is though.

PREMIER:

No, it's not.

REPORTER:

Parts of it are, and when you look at New Acland...

PREMIER:

Yeah, parts – the expansion. No, and New Acland, the court decision is coming down next week. You don't have long.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Can you please just be polite please? That is coming down next week, and everyone will know the answer.

REPORTER:

Just on the Opposition's plan to four-lane the Bruce Highway. The Opposition is adamant that they essentially had phone calls that say they're going to get this 80 per cent if they win Government and they'll be able to four-lane the highway to Gympie to Cairns...

PREMIER:

Look, we would welcome... let me say, we have put in place a 10-year plan for the Bruce Highway. Mark Bailey yesterday, the Minister for Main Roads, released information about how we continuously write to the Federal Government asking for more money. They've said that we've had enough. So, you know, if there's going to be more money for infrastructure, I'll be the first person to welcome more money for infrastructure from the Federal Government. I have been calling for more money for federal infrastructure in Queensland for the last five and a half years. I've said numerous times in the State Parliament how Victoria and New South Wales gets more money for infrastructure than Queensland does.

REPORTER:

So if you win the election, would you be making a phone call to sort of follow up on whether you'll be able to secure that deal as well?

PREMIER:

Well, we're looking forward to seeing the Federal Budget. I'm not privy to that at the moment. It's coming down on Tuesday. We look forward to seeing Queensland's fair share in the Federal Budget.

REPORTER:

What do you see as being the most important seat for Labor to win?

PREMIER:

Ever seat. Every single seat.

REPORTER:

Sorry, just quickly. How are we looking for crowd numbers for the AFL? Have you had an update?

PREMIER:

Well, my understanding is that it's sold out tonight. So that's going to be a great match between the Lions and Richmond. Go the Lions.

REPORTER:

Sorry, I mean the grand final.

PREMIER:

Oh, the grand final? I might get... the Deputy Premier might be across that or we can get information.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It's 75 per cent, about 30,000. That's what we're expecting.

REPORTER:

Would you mind saying that?

PREMIER:

You want to say that?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Sure. After the successful trial of 75 per cent density in our stadiums, the AFL grand final is good to go at the Gabba, 75 per cent, 30,000 people. We'll have a great time that day.

PREMIER:

Thank you. Alright, let's go have a look.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

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

Date: 9 October 2020

Duration: 27 minutes

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Good morning everyone. We have the Chief Health Officer with us today for what is a fantastic COVID update for Queensland, a real cause for celebration. It is now 28 days since the last new case of that south west Brisbane cluster, a fantastic result for Queensland, very, very well done. I can also report that we've had no further cases of COVID-19 overnight. We now have just four active cases all up and in the last testing period, Queenslanders met our target, in fact we did 5555 tests, whichever way you look at it is a great number. We can also confirm that police have identified three further show support workers who travelled to Queensland inappropriately and have now been asked to leave and [inaudible] way returning. We continue to very closely monitor the case numbers in New South Wales and Victoria. We are particularly closely monitoring the effort in New South Wales to manage that new cluster that they are experiencing in south western Sydney. You'll have noted that in recent days New South Wales is reporting similar numbers to Victoria, in fact yesterday New South Wales had more cases than Victoria. All of these figures, all of that data comes from a national report from the federal government's national incident room, so I just want to emphasise that this isn't data that Queensland is creating, it is data provided by states to the Commonwealth and then distributed to all of the states. Also, really pleased to see that New Zealand has confirmed today that they have eliminated their community transmission, which is very, very good news and so they of course now join Queensland, WA, the Northern Territory, South Australia and the ACT all having no community transmission. And I think it just underlines how disappointing it is to see the New South Wales Premier admit that they don't share that aspiration, they don't aspire to that target, that they've effectively given up on that goal of 28 days of no unlinked transmission. We are also continuing to get positive waste water test results from Cannonvale, and that is concerning, the Chief Health Officer will talk more about that, but we would like to see more people getting tested in and around Airlie Beach and Mackay, that is really very important. The World Bank issued a statement today endorsing Australia's swift response to the coronavirus outbreak, our swift application of restrictions and urging Australia not to lift restrictions too quickly in pursuit of economic growth, urging us to retain restrictions for so long as they are required to suppress community transmission. I think that is underlined by new data out of the United States overnight showing that the US government will run a deficit of \$3.1 trillion – that is \$4.3 trillion Australian dollars – a massive deficit and just underlines the economic impact of not prioritising health care first and foremost. In France they've seen a new high of case numbers and the number of people in hospital in France is now back at a three-month high as that

second wave escalates higher than the first. Brazil just passed five million cases, five million cases. Now, as I outlined – as I've outlined in the past – my intention with these COVID updates through the caretaker period, through the election campaign is that we will provide a caretaker... sorry, a COVID update, a coronavirus update. I will speak, the Chief Health Officer will speak, the Chief Health Officer will take questions, then we will allow her to get back to her important work while we hold any political questions and questions related to the election campaign, I am happy to address those once Jeanette has left.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you very much Deputy Premier. So, very good news here in Queensland, no new cases overnight, and as you've heard it is 28 days now that we have not had cases so that I can declare that last cluster totally over. So that is a really good thing. We did have one case that I received a positive result on yesterday, that is one of the crew members on that ship sited off Weipa. If you remember, we had two positive cases in crew members who were transferred to Cairns Hospital over a week ago, so we were doing the routine day 10 testing for all the crew and one of those tests came back positive. We have re-tested that person and it is negative, so at this stage we're just working out whether he might be a persistent shedder that has previously had the infection and recovered, but persistently shedding, so we'll get some more tests done, or whether indeed it is a false positive. He is perfectly well and he is isolating in his cabin at the moment and we'll work out [inaudible] or not, and we will of course continue to test all of the remaining crew on that vessel. So, this is an excellent outcome for Queensland. Now, there has also been a good outcome from New South Wales, so they have found links for seven of the eight cases that they notified yesterday and I understand they have a further 10 cases today, five of them in hotel quarantine which of course aren't any risk at all, and then five in the community. But all five of them, they know how they've acquired those cases. So, New South Wales has extremely good contact tracing capability and they're using that at the moment. We just need to wait a bit longer before we decide whether or not there's been any need to change that plan to open to New South Wales, and at this point in time, is planned for the 1st of November. As you would know, we use that 28 days of no unlinked community cases to assist us in determining whether it is safe at that point in time at the end of the month to open to another state. And that has stood us very, very well in Queensland. We will continue to monitor what is happening in New South Wales. They do have a concern which they're well aware of, and well on top of, at the Liverpool Hospital and also at a private clinic, so those five cases today that they've announced, I understand, are all related to healthcare facilities. And that is why, although it is very difficult and it is a difficult decision each time it is made, but we do ask people who have been to healthcare facilities in either Sydney or in Melbourne, that they do need to quarantine when they come back to Queensland because we know there have been a lot of cases that have occurred out of healthcare facilities. indeed, here in Queensland we saw that small cluster at the Ipswich Hospital that Ipswich Hospital managed so well and got on top of very quickly. But it can be hard getting on top of those clusters in healthcare facilities, and for a whole range of reasons which are quite understandable. So that is where we're going at the moment in terms of assessing what is going on in New South Wales, but of course we're also monitoring very, very carefully what is going on in Victoria, they continue to have those very strict systems in place in terms of managing movement in their community, and as a result they've been able to control those [inaudible]. Happy to take questions.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, how much longer do you think you will have to wait before an answer on [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

At the end of each month is when we assess what has been going on in the previous 28 days, and so we will make that assessment then because there are a whole range of issues. Most issues New South Wales are on top of, they are very good. So we also want to see significant testing. I mean, there is no point just having a bland 28 days of no community acquired unlinked cases if you don't have testing in place. So we do like to see the amount of testing. Then they have also got sewerage testing, which has proved to be a very useful strategy. And indeed, that picked up some of their more recent cases – before they picked them up in people they picked it up in sewerage first – and it led them to where to go to test. So that is a very important issue. So there are quite a number of factors that we take into consideration and look at. And those will be taken into consideration at the end of the month.

Maybe if I could, I forgot to mention our sewerage testing here in Queensland, which also I think is very, very important for us. We are not quite sure yet what it means, but we know it is a trigger that we need to do more testing, as we have just seen in New South Wales. So we have had quite a few positive tests in Cannonvale now and Airlie Beach, so it is really important that anyone who lives in that area of Mackay and has any symptoms at all, that they come forward and get tested because we are seeing persistent virus in the sewerage there. The rest of the state, although we have had positives, I am quite comfortable that I can relate that positive test in the sewerage to cases that I am aware of in the community or in hotel quarantine.

REPORTER:

Just in regards to that 48-hour window. Is that [inaudible]? Do you have like an actual hour or an actual date [inaudible] firm deadline that they have to [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No. So it is 48 hours from when the case interview occurs. That's the timeframe. So, I discussed this with the Chief Health Officer in New South Wales yesterday and was given all of the information about the seven contacts that they had found links to – so there is only one that they haven't – and then today the five, I understand they have links to all five. They were linked to healthcare. So it is really finding out from New South Wales. And indeed, they have now found the link for that case that they had a while back that they couldn't find the link at that time. So it is around two to three days from when that notification occurs, so there is a bit of time to go.

REPORTER:

So does that mean there is only the one case that they haven't got the link to?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. That is correct.

REPORTER:

So long do they have [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

As I said, it is 48 hours.

REPORTER:

There was a lot of political talk yesterday about [inaudible] 48 hours national decision, 48 hours, 48 hours, 48 hours. Now you have said two to three days.

DR YOUNG:

You have to start the 48 hours at some point. Do you start when the person had the swab taken? Do you start it when the pathology lab gets the result. Do you start it etcetera, etcetera. So a decision was made nationally that the 48 hours would start from when the case interview has occurred. And that makes sense because that is when you have the information from the patient as to where they have been and where they might have contracted it.

REPORTER:

Are you feeling more confident now [inaudible] New South Wales [inaudible] will go ahead [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I am feeling more confident, and they've got to wait until the end of the month. There is actually quite a bit of time between now and the end of the month to see what's happening because, although they are finding the contacts, because they are very, very good at contact tracing in New South Wales – they always have been right from the start and it has stood them really well – they are getting continuing cases. So we will just have to watch and see what happens.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, Gary Ralph, the brain surgery patient. Have any concessions been made there? Is he going to be allowed to go home and recover there, or has he been told he has stay in hospital?

DR YOUNG:

I asked one of the senior doctors at the PA Hospital to go and assess him last night. That occurred, and based on that advice this morning I have said that he can quarantine at home. There are a few conditions on that. I have asked for an urgent COVID test to be done on him and his partner this morning. We are waiting on those results. If those are negative, then we have organised for an ambulance to assist him. He has got some medical appointments first that need to occur.

REPORTER:

Has a precedent been set in now what happens when somebody else might have surgery [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No. This has not happened often, but it has happened a number of times over the last few months – from when we brought in quarantine, so over the last six months. But when people clearly can't manage in hotel quarantine but they don't need hospital care, and that was the decision I wanted sorted out last night to make sure that we were not discharging him from our care, because in the hotel he was in our care and I didn't want to discharge him from our care into a situation that was unsafe for him.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Because he actually went and had a medical appointment and I got information from there.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Well it was done. So I found that out yesterday and asked for the review and it happened.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Sorry, I can't hear.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

What aspect, sorry, of the plan? It is quite and extensive plan.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

From August?

REPORTER:

From August, yeah.

DR YOUNG:

We are only October. Actually, we have been very, very fortunate in Queensland. We have not had a lot of cases. So we had those large cases in our first, very small wave. Things since then have been fairly stable. So unless there is some concern with some part of the plan which hasn't come to me, we wouldn't be updating them routinely.

REPORTER:

Can I just ask about the 28 days? So is that a government decision, or is that a decision of the AHPPC? There was some criticism yesterday from the Health Minister in New South Wales describing the government as "petty." But is it actually your decision or the AHPPC [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

That is a health decision that was discussed at AHPPC.

REPORTER:

So when would that have been made, like the 28-day decision about...?

DR YOUNG:

That is right from day one. So people might remember, I have been using that 28 days very early on because that is the traditional – and we discussed it earlier at the start of this press conference – that is when an outbreak is over, two incubation periods. So early on it was decided that one incubation period for this virus was 14 days, and that has remained throughout this. There's been some discussion about changing that incubation period but at each time it's been decided that it remains the appropriate timeframe. And then you declare an outbreak over or you declare risk no longer being there after two incubation periods because then that allows if you've missed for one chain of transmission. So it's a pretty standard thing. But then we had the discussion at AHPPC to just tighten it up in terms of that discussion I had earlier with you about when does the timeframe extend, for how long before you can find out whether something is actually related, connected, linked.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible] 48 hours starts from the interview of the mystery case. How does that mystery case... like what's [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

You need to ask New South Wales that question.

REPORTER:

Are you aware of [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Nope. I've been told when they announce their cases and that they've started contacting them. Now, which person they contact first, whether it was which of those eight it was, I don't know.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] lack of communication [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Nope. We're having fantastic communication. I'm getting all the information I need to be able to make those decisions. Yes.

REPORTER:

When do you expect to be updated on that 48-hour [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We next meet on Monday. So I'm sure I'll get more information next Monday.

REPORTER:

So in March you released modelling that suggested that we could have 12,500 deaths in the first six months [inaudible]. How do you feel now and do you have any updated modelling done [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Well, I feel extremely relieved. I mean, that terrified me. We got up to 86 cases in one day back in March. That was frightening. We were doubling our case numbers every four days. We were no different to what was happening in New York, in Italy, in London, and we looked like that's what we'd be facing here. Now, I have a lot of confidence in our health system. I have a lot of confidence in the work that we did to procure additional ventilators, to train additional staff, to go and do all of that work to put in place all of those plans, but I'm so grateful, so thankful, so relieved that we didn't have to do it. Now our job is to maintain where we are. We're in a really good position. And we heard from the Federal Treasurer that he doesn't expect any international travel until towards the end of next year, so I believe we can maintain the position where we are – that we can maintain suppression of this virus. We have got really good systems in place. We have got good contact tracers. They showed what they can achieve with that most recent outbreak which probably occurred in some of the worst nightmare settings for me, and they managed it absolutely brilliantly. So I am confident that when we get our next case here in the community in Queensland – and it will happen. This is a virus – we cannot stop it coming into Queensland. All we can do is manage it when it comes in. I'm also confident that Queenslanders are doing a brilliant job. You heard earlier that more than 5000 tests were done in the last 24 hours, and that's in an environment where we genuinely don't think we've got the virus circulating. So we had people coming forward, putting themselves forward – it's not the most pleasant of tests – and then isolating until they get the result. And as long as Queenslanders keep doing that, I'm confident that we're not going to see that wave with 12,500 deaths.

DEPUTY PREMIER

Thanks Jeannette. I will see you shortly.

REPORTER:

Minister, Gary Ralph – we spoke about it earlier – did the Prime Minister intervene?
[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I'm not aware of any intervention. But what you've just heard from the Chief Health Officer is her outlining the process that we go through here. When people return, they go into hotel quarantine, there is medical assessments done, and then on the basis of that advice she makes decisions. I think this has been actually a pretty swift process when you consider, I understand, he only returned to the state a couple of days ago.

REPORTER:

Did you get a call from the Prime Minister or did you get a call from Wayne Swan?
[inaudible] all been pretty heartbroken and annoyed about this particular case, did anyone influence things at all other than...?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

No, I certainly haven't had a call from the Prime Minister, but what you can be very confident of is throughout we have not been intimidated by the Prime Minister or the other bullies in the Federal Coalition. We have taken the health advice, and that's precisely what we've done here and I'm really pleased with this outcome.

REPORTER:

What do you make of Brad Hazzard's comments this morning saying [inaudible] all political from your end? [inaudible] but what do you make of his comments?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I don't know what Brad's talking about there. We talk often as you might expect. I know that Brad is very eager to come to Queensland. I know he's desperate to get to Noosa. In fact, I've promised to buy him dinner in Noosa when he is allowed to come back here. But I wouldn't take much notice of one politician calling another politician political. What I would point out though, and this is quite different in Queensland to New South Wales. The Public Health Act in New South Wales provides most of the powers that our Chief Health Officer has to the Health Minister. So in New South Wales, these decisions literally are political. They are literally made by a politician. Whereas here in Queensland, we have a system that puts our Chief Health Officer in charge of those decisions, and I think that's a much better system. I can also say that Queensland will not be lectured to by New South Wales. Like, this is the state that gave us the Ruby Princess, the state that had those aged care outbreaks. We have avoided those situations here in Queensland precisely because we have aimed to suppress every outbreak of community transmission. That's what we've done and we've done successfully. And as I say, I was pretty disappointed to hear the Premier of New South Wales say that she doesn't even aspire to do that. Can I just go back to Janelle's point

about the modelling because I think it's really important. We were projecting in October a three-month peak of the first wave in which 12,500 people would die – 12,500 Queenslanders who are alive today because of the actions that we have all taken together. They are loved ones, family members, grandmas, granddads, who are with us today. Instead we've only experienced six deaths. Of course, they are all very tragic. But six compared to 12,500 – that's the choice that we collectively as Queenslanders made to save those lives. While we weren't sure of it at that time, we now know for certain that actually that health response delivered us a better economic outcome as well. It's allowed us to keep people in work, allowed us to keep key industries like resources and agriculture opening and functioning and delivering revenue to our state.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Oh look, I outlined at various times in the lead-up to caretaker and also more recently the exact process that we would go through with these daily briefings. That's exactly what we've done here this morning. I think it's appropriate I continue to be the Health Minister of the state. We continue to be the Government of the state. We'll continue to work with the Chief Health Officer throughout this period. I think that's what Queenslanders would expect from us.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

It is, and that's precisely why I asked you to hold political questions until after she had returned to her office. But I think it's also important that the people of Queensland see that our Government is continuing to work with our health leadership to keep them safe.

[GAP]

REPORTER:

Can I just ask one last question? With the 48 hours, so it's fair enough to say that's up to the Chief Health Officer when that starts? Like, she'll find out from New South Wales how it's...?

DEPUTY PREMIER:

That's right. It's up to the Chief Health Officer, in fact, in New South Wales to make that determination, and they'll advise the other chief health officers via the AHPPC and the National Incident Room. We trust them to make those determinations and provide us with that advice. Thank you.



[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

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

Date: 16 October 2020

Duration: 30 mins approx.

E&OE

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Well as is my practice during this caretaker period, we have a COVID update for this morning, Jeannette and I will give that, we're happy take questions relating to COVID and Queensland's response to COVID, then Jeannette will get back to her important work and I'm happy to address any political or election related issues.

We have two new cases of COVID-19 in Queensland overnight, both are returned travellers in hotel quarantine and so not of particular concern. They tested positive in hotel quarantine and the Chief Health Officer has further details about them. That leaves us at four active cases. We tested 4738 samples overnight, including 204 in Townsville and 130 in Queensland [sic] and we continue to thank every Queenslander who went and got tested. It is very much appreciated. That means we've now gone 36 days since our last case of community transmission, and it's more than 14 days since we released that roadmap and further eased restrictions here in Queensland. We continue to monitor the situation in New South Wales and Victoria very carefully before any decisions will be made about our borders, however given that 16 days of progress we can bring forward the next stage of easing of restrictions, which was described as Stage 5, other than the border element. And so effective from this afternoon, as a reward for Queenslanders, we will be able to... young people at formals will be able to dance again, up to 40 people at a time will be able to dance at weddings, and residents of aged care facilities, of nursing homes, will again be able to go on excursions, to the beach, to play bingo, that sort of thing. So this is a great outcome. It allows us to further ease restrictions. We're doing this in that graduated way, testing throughout the incubation period, throughout at least 14 days each time so that we can see that each easing hasn't had an impact on our ability to control the virus.

At the same time as we continue to ease restrictions here in Queensland, other parts of the world that opened up too soon, that were not cautious enough, are having to reapply restrictions. So Paris and London have reimposed restrictions, restricting the number of people who can be gathered to six, restricting households from gathering together. In some parts of the UK, bars, gyms and other businesses have been closed down. Germany has introduced new rules to restrict the virus. In Northern Ireland, the schools, pubs and restaurants are all closed. And so because of our response and because Queenslanders have done so well, we can continue to ease restrictions, continue to get people back to work whereas in those places that rushed to lift their restrictions, they are having to reapply them during second and third waves. Jeannette?

DR YOUNG:

So we have two new cases in Queensland overnight, both of them in hotel quarantine so not a risk to the community. I expect we are going to see more cases in hotel quarantine because the world now has over 38 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, and unfortunately across the world more than 1 million people have died. Now, as more Australians come home, which is everyone's aim of course, we will see more Australians in hotel quarantine with the virus. But we can treat them here in Queensland, we have really good hospitals, we know how to treat COVID-19 effectively, and of course we'll be doing that going forward. So those two new cases today – one was another minor who was in Cairns in the hotel up there. He was a colleague of the case from the other day. There are 17 minors who've returned from Africa in that cohort, so I wouldn't be surprised if we see more but they're in a very safe place and we'll be able to manage each of them if they develop COVID. The second case was someone who had returned from the United States and was in hotel quarantine down in the Gold Coast. So again, we will manage that case as we will any Queenslanders or anyone in Queensland who develops COVID-19.

Then some excellent news this afternoon, because we have now gone more than two weeks since we last removed some of those restrictions and we have not seen any transmission of COVID in Queensland during that time – indeed it's 36 days since we last had an infectious case who was infectious in the community – so we can, this afternoon from 4 o'clock, do four more things. The first one is we can gather in groups of 40 in our own homes or out in the community. So in places where we don't have those COVID Safe Plans, where we just get together in households with friends, with family. So 40 people can do that now. Then also, a Year 12 can celebrate with dancing at their end of year formals, at their end of year graduation ceremonies. So anyone who attends can dance. And that's a great thing to happen. Then at weddings, 40 people can dance – any 40 people but a maximum of 40 people at one point in time at the wedding. And we'll just see how that works. And that's on our roadmap, we'll review that and see what happens then with the next stage in the roadmap. And then the last one is that residents of our aged care facilities can return to going out on excursions. So we all know that residents in aged care facilities, if they're able to and well enough, they can go out to the local RSL, to the shops, maybe out to a hairdresser. So they can continue... they can go out on those excursions together. So that is a good thing to happen there.

So these things can be done because Queenslanders have now managed that balance between how to manage the virus and how to live as much of a normal life as possible. And we do need to be alert. We do know, given those cases increases elsewhere in the world, and to a lesser extent, but they're under control, in Victoria and New South Wales – we do know there is a risk that we will have another case in Queensland. But we know how to manage that. We know exactly what needs to be done. So everyone just has to, as they have done to date, nearly 1 million Queenslanders have done to date, if you're unwell, any symptoms at all, just come forward and get tested. We've got pretty strict processes in place now, so you do need to wait at home until you get that result which is usually about 24 hours, it's very important. But look, any symptoms at all, please come forward and get tested because if we find that very first case, we know we can get on it very quickly. We'll have to have some restrictions in place as we've seen before, but they're minimal, and then we can immediately solve that particular cluster and go back to where we were. So it's really important – please, any

symptoms at all, just come forward and get tested. That's critical. And keep an eye out on things. So it is important, when it doesn't matter, always maintain that social distancing. Some places you can't, you don't have an option. Right? But where you can, just maintain that 1.5 metre social distancing and wash your hands. We saw that latest CSIRO advice that the virus can survive for up to 28 days on hard surfaces. We've known that for quite some time. We didn't know it was as long as that, but we've known that and that's why washing your hands is just so important. It is a fragile virus. It doesn't take much to kill it. So it just needs a wipe down with a bit of bleach, it's not a big issue. But sometimes not all surfaces get wiped down, so just keep washing your hands is a really good thing. And then there is no need to shake anyone's hand. You know, keep that for your own relatives and your own close group, don't shake the hands of strangers. That's how... and I'm finding it still difficult – that's how we used to always introduce ourselves, but please, we don't need to do that now. We're living lives a little bit differently, and if we can manage those little things we'll be able to manage the big things very easily and manage to return to a more normal way of living. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] we're going to be living with this virus in some form [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. I think that once we have a vaccine – and there's a lot of very promising vaccines out there, 193 being trialled around the world today – that will help but it's been clear that the first vaccines are most likely to be around 50 per cent effective. They might be better than that. But we've dealt with that over many decades with flu. The flu vaccine each year is between, you know, around 20 to 70 per cent effective. So we know that that's the case there. There's every chance that this vaccine will be – it might be better, but it's too early to say – but it might be 50 per cent effective. That means that immediately halves the risk, but it doesn't remove the risk. Which is why I think that people should continue to practise what they're doing. I've actually really enjoyed this last winter. I didn't get a single cold. I didn't get the flu. Every winter I always get one, you know, one or two and it'll knock me out for a few days. I didn't have that at all this year. Not even a sniffle. And I would say, if we went out and spoke to people, there'd be lots of people out there who didn't get sick at all, and that's a nice way to be. So if we could all continue that by those simple things of washing our hands, maintaining distance where we can, that's actually a really good outcome. So I think we just have to live a little bit differently. Probably live like our grand parents did. My grandmother certainly told me when I was young that I didn't wash my hands enough, and that why didn't you wash your hands before coming to lunch. I'm sure a lot of us would have had that. It was a different way of living. Perfectly sensible way of living, and I think we probably do need to take that on board. But if we do take that on board, then I think we can very safely live a normal life with the virus while we work through and get some good treatments. There are lots of them at the moment being trialled, and I'm sure we'll end up with some really good treatments for this virus, and when we get the vaccine.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It's a lot less than we're allowing elsewhere. So elsewhere we're having gatherings of up to 1000 outside – which is safe because it's outside. We're allowing 500 inside. I mean, having 40 people in your home I do regard as reasonably safe. Nothing is risk free, but they're 40 people that you know and you have some sort of relationship with, and most importantly of all it's much easier for us to contact trace because we know that you'll have their details and we can get hold of those 40, and 40 is a reasonable number that we know we can manage. You've got to remember we've been going at this now for 10 months. So we've got all of our systems beautifully worked through. We've got really, really good teams out there. We just saw the most magnificent response to that last cluster when we ended up with 55 cases. We did so much contact tracing for that cluster, and it worked very well. And even this Townsville case that may or may not be a case that we've been dealing with recently, all of the teams involved came back to me and said "boy, those restaurants had it so beautifully sorted. It was just so easy to do." So these are the things that Queenslanders have taken on board and are doing so well, and because of that, that's why I think we'll be able to live very successfully with this virus.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Of course it does. I mean, looking at how New South Wales has responded to their latest outbreak is reassuring, but also we know they are on high alert. Their Chief Health Officer has come out and said she is concerned, and if she's come out and said she's concerned then of course I'm going to be concerned. And the other thing is that we have a lot more movement between New South Wales and Queensland than there is between New South Wales and the Northern Territory. So the risk is therefore higher. We see a lot more people from Sydney who would want to come up to Queensland. We know that. We saw that the last time the border was fully opened to New South Wales there were very large numbers. So we just have to be a little bit cautious. I just would like to see them get more control over their current outbreak. They're just every day they're getting more cases. I haven't seen today's numbers at this stage. I've seen Victoria's numbers – they've had two cases that they've announced today which is really good news. I'm sure they'll be working through as to what restrictions they therefore can lift on Sunday safely.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yep, it'll be the end of the month.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

That depends on what information we have and the situation we're in at that point in time.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, are you likely to make any extra decisions about the AFL grand final increasing the stadium capacity, or is that going to [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Yeah, so we agreed to 30,000 and that's what they're working towards very effectively. They've got a few games in the lead up to that that they can just test all their systems again, which is really good.

REPORTER:

So there is no likelihood it would increase to [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It is unlikely, but nothing is impossible in this world, but it is unlikely.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It is due today, I haven't got it yet, but it is due today.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

All it does is it tells me that there is viral fragments there, that is all it says, or they're not there. It is very hard then to link back to anything. So, there are a whole lot of reasons why there might be viral fragments in the sewerage in Townsville. It could be that there is a person there shedding the virus that we don't know about, that of course is a possibility, and that is a possibility that I am most concerned about. Whether it is likely is a different question altogether. Then we know that there are a lot of ships that go along there, it is a very bust part of the coastline, and we know that some of that sewerage ends up in the Townsville wastewater to be treated, so there could be... that could be a reason for it. We also know that you can shed virus for a long time, it doesn't mean you're infectious, but you can shed it and perhaps there is a case that has gone out of quarantine that we've cleared, that is now totally well, but they might have travelled to Townsville. We have no internal travel restrictions within Queensland because we don't need them, and there is no risk if that were to happen. But we could well have someone who has been in quarantine, one of these cases that every day or so I am announcing that has been in hotel quarantine, they get better and are released, but they can still be shedding.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It isn't a lot, but clearly people there are confident because they're not coming forward, I assume they don't have symptoms, or they're not concerned. But there is more testing being done there than there has been before. So, there are a number of people coming forward.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I would like to see about the 5000 number, but given now that was what I wanted to see before we had sewerage testing, now that we've got sewerage testing – and we're expanding that across the state and we're getting the results more quickly – it is actually that is becoming more important because sewerage can pick up one case in 10,000 people, whereas testing people only picks up that one case. So, sewerage testing is actually very helpful, we're just working through exactly what it means.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

We're at the moment taking a lot more people than the Northern Territory is planning to, so we've already got significant numbers, and that was recently increased quite a lot.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Absolutely. So we're getting out of them one or two positive cases a day, remember at the peak of this we were getting 86 positive cases a day and we managed that. We can manage the one or two or three, there is no concern there.

REPORTER:

If we got another outbreak, in say a regional city – Victoria is testing all of Shepperton, do we have plans to do something like that [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We've done that before. So we've had cases pop up somewhere and then we just put in place a pop-up clinic immediately. So we've got those processes, every hospital and health service across the state has the ability to rapidly increase testing.

REPORTER:

With the Townsville woman case, there was a suggestion a couple of days ago that it may be a false positive, has it been confirmed?

DR YOUNG:

No, we haven't confirmed whether it is or isn't a false positive, that work needs to be done, of course, by Victoria. So, at the moment Victoria is saying it is a confirmed case, but they're looking into it in more detail at the moment.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

You've got the roadmap, you can see what the next stage is. If things are going really well, we may bring it forward, as we have done with this one.

[Gap for political content]

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

What you saw in those employment figures was actually an increase in the number of people employed, we created roughly a thousand jobs every single day. What you can't do is compare unemployment rates between states that are still locked down and largely reliant on JobKeeper and states that have successfully controlled the virus and have people back to work. So the change in the unemployment figure is almost entirely explained by the change in the participation rate. More Queenslanders looking for work and that is because our economy is open and because businesses are open. You don't go looking for work when your state is still in lockdown. You go looking for work when your economy is open and businesses are working again and that is exactly what you saw in those figures yesterday.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

New South Wales is still managing active outbreaks, New South Wales just delayed the further easing of their restrictions, so the next two biggest state economies still have restrictions, are still attempting to get on top of COVID-19. What you saw in Queensland was a surge in participation, and partly that was offset by the number of jobs that were created.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

They're very different economies, but you compare Queensland's participation rate and Queensland's job growth rate, which are both very, very important measures, and we created a thousand jobs every single day, and that is what we'll continue to do.

[Gap for political content]

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DEPUTY PREMIER:

I think it is really disappointing that National Cabinet was cancelled. I understand that travel arrangements need to change, but National Cabinet is really important. We are managing a global crisis here and National Cabinet is important and has important decisions to be made. I think it is a shame, I think he could've come down here to Brisbane, he could've used the same secure room that the Premier uses to dial into National Cabinet, but he chose not to do so. I suspect it is as much to do with not wanting to be in New South Wales right now, I don't think today is a very good day to be a Liberal in New South Wales, so I suspect that is why he didn't want to be in Sydney, but there are lots of ways that people can get around. I know he doesn't like to travel on commercial planes, but there were commercial planes flying from Cairns to Brisbane late yesterday after they learned that their plane was unavailable. But even if he wouldn't lower himself to fly business class on a plane down to Brisbane, the defence force has plenty of planes in Townsville that could've been available for him. So I think if he really wanted to, he could have made it work, and certainly the Premier would've been very happy for him to join her here at the secure room at 1 William Street. I also understand the Commonwealth has a secure room at the Commonwealth Parliamentary offices just down the road at Waterfront Place, so even if he didn't want to be in the room here with us, he could've dialled in from the Commonwealth offices there.

[ENDS]

Released under the
Official Information Act

Engagement: Press Conference, Brisbane

Speaker/s*: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk
Health Minister Yvette D’Ath
Chief Health Officer Jeannette Young

Date: Friday, 13 November 2020

Duration: 17 minutes

E&OE

PREMIER:

Thanks everyone, and good afternoon, Queensland. And today we have some more good news for Queensland, because Queensland has done such a wonderful job that we are able to ease even more restrictions from 4:00pm November 17, which is next Tuesday. So, if you'll bear with me, I'll run through them because they are quite detailed and quite complex. But I think Queenslanders are going to be very, very happy with this outcome. So, in relation to gatherings – so this is about people coming to your own homes or in public spaces – that will increase from 40 to 50. In relation to indoor premises, this will increase from one person per four square metres to one person per two square metres. Now, this is great news for our restaurants, our cafes, our pubs, our clubs, our indoor play areas, our museums, art galleries, places of worship, convention centres, and even Parliament House. So, that's going to mean good news for jobs, especially in those areas such as our restaurants, our cafes, our museums and our art galleries. So, this is all wonderful news. Now, weddings. Here's some more good news: Up to 200 people can attend a wedding. And where's Lydia? All guests can dance. So, there will be a lot of happy people out there. In news for people who are attending funerals, we know, of course, that people attending funerals have had to go through a lot recently. So, up to 200 people can attend a funeral. Indoor events – so, this is seated, ticketed venues – to increase from 50 per cent to 100 per cent, but patrons will have to wear masks on entry and exit. Like, that's... We'll get Dr Young to talk a little bit more about that. We're asking people to do that. So that means theatre, live music, cinemas, indoor sports, and performers can reduce distance from audiences from four metres to two metres, except choirs, which will remain at four metres from the audience. Now, outdoor events: Increase in outdoor events from 1000 to 1500 with a COVID-safe checklist. Larger events, of course, need a COVID-safe plan. Now, here's a good one I think all Queenslanders are going to be happy about it – open-air stadiums. The increase in seated capacity will go from 75 per cent to 100 per cent. Now, this means the Cauldron can be filled to 100 per cent capacity for State of Origin next Wednesday night. So, if you don't have a ticket yet, hopefully some more tickets can be released, and let's fill that Cauldron, let's fill Suncorp and cheer our mighty Maroons on. And on that note too, can I also wish the women's team for Queensland all the very best tonight against New South Wales. Now, again for Lydia, outdoor dancing is now allowed, especially

like for music festivals. So, I think everyone... And Jacky will be happy about that too. You're a young person. [Laughter] And, Clare, you might fit into that category as well.

REPORTER:

I might.

PREMIER:

Not Lane.

REPORTER:

A little bit. [Laughter]

PREMIER:

Don't be offended. [Laughter]

Okay. So look, this is absolutely wonderful news, and this is because of the great work of Queenslanders. And this is the advice that has been provided to myself and the Health Minister, Yvette D'Ath, from Dr Young. So Dr Young will go through that in a bit more detail. But that is excellent news and, of course, that's going to be very well-received by Queenslanders. Can I just comment on a couple of things that came out of National Cabinet? You would have heard that Queensland, we offered up an extra 150 places to allow international arrivals. This is people who are coming from areas around the world who want to come back home for Christmas. Our initial cap was 1000, we increased it to 1150. We've added an extra 150 there as well. We do have some hotel capacity to do that, and I thank the hotels who have actually been providing that service. And, of course, you can understand, with what's happening around the world why people want to come back home and be with their families. So, I might leave it... Oh, just one thing I'll add and that is in relation to borders. Of course, there is a national aspiration, of course, to have the borders open before Christmas. In relation to Victoria, we're very encouraged with what's happening down there. And we will be looking very closely at the end of the month at Victoria and also New South Wales. There may be some hotspots – Dr Young will assess this at the end of the month – but we are very encouraged with what we are seeing in Victoria at this stage. So, I'll hand over to our Health Minister, and then Dr Young, and then we're happy to take some questions. Thanks Yvette.

MINISTER D'ATH:

Thank you Premier. So what we know is there is one new case in the last 24 hours in Queensland. This case has been acquired overseas and detected in hotel quarantine. So we are very pleased that it is almost two months since we've had a COVID-19 case that has been acquired in the community. How does this compare? Well, the reality is that the UK, the US, and Italy alone have recorded over 1.2 million new cases in the last seven days – over 1.2 million new cases. What we are seeing in Europe is they are currently tracking almost 24,000 new cases daily at the moment. So what this says to us is the COVID-19 virus is still out there, and we still need to be vigilant. But Queenslanders have done such an amazing job and that is why we are able to ease these restrictions today. And the easing of these restrictions that we are announcing will come in next Tuesday at 4:00pm are significant for our economy,

for businesses, and for particularly tourism and tourism in North and Far North Queensland, who have been calling on an easing of restrictions, and particularly looking at the one person per two square metre. So, this is going to be very big and support many jobs in Queensland because it will allow for many venues to double in capacity. This is great for jobs for Queensland. Of course, having ticketed events where you are allocated seating to now move to 100 per cent is fantastic. Cinemas open again, live performances for the arts, which we know have struggled so much, this will be really great for them, and of course open outdoor stadiums and of course, the State of Origin next week. So these are really big improvements, but of course we can only make sure that these easing of restrictions will be successful going forward if Queenslanders continue to practice good hygiene, to make sure they are socially distancing and very importantly, if they are unwell, they are staying home and getting tested if they have any symptoms whatsoever. We need for people to keep doing this. The other thing I call on everyone to play their part, is that in easing these restrictions it does increase the risk, so we want all venues and businesses to make sure that they are proactively engaging with patrons and making sure they are checking into venues. The onus is on all of us, venues, businesses shouldn't just simply hope that people are checking in, they must proactively make sure people are checking in, and as a patron we want to get into the habit, when you walk into that venue, stop, think, have you checked in? Don't sit down until you have checked in. by doing this, this simple step will ensure that we can keep our community safe and that we can continue to ease restrictions like we are doing today. So a great step forward for Queensland, for our economy and keeping our community safe. I will now hand over to Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

So indeed, it is excellent news. We've had one new case in hotel quarantine, and I am sure you've been noticing most days we do get new cases in hotel quarantine, and that is because of those over 52 million cases that have now been confirmed through the rest of the world. So we'll continue to manage that and we've been very good at managing that in Queensland, managing those international arrivals and managing quarantine so that people coming home to Queensland don't put the rest of the community at risk. I am grateful to them, I am sure it is not pleasant spending two weeks in quarantine but it is absolutely essential. Now we still do need to maintain some restrictions out there in our community because we don't know when we're going to have our next case of COVID-19 pop up. You would've seen yesterday in Auckland, they had three new cases of COVID-19 there, one of them in hotel quarantine, one of them a local contact of a known case, but the third one, they don't know where it was acquired and how it was acquired so they are now considering whether they have to put restrictions back in place. So that is why we do need, as the Minister said, we do need to ask people to give their information when they go into venues so we can really rapidly get on top of any outbreak. So we want to find the first case in an outbreak, not the 40th, because then that will take us months to manage it. If we can find the first case, we can get on top of it and we can manage it really quickly and we can not have to go and put all of those other restrictions back in place. So it is just really important, if anyone is sick with any symptoms – and I think people are pretty well at the moment when you go out and about which is great – so any symptoms, just come forward and get tested. We are getting pretty good at that now, we can usually turn it around in 24 hours, so it is inconvenient for that period, but it is so important, just come forward and get tested. You can go on the website to find your closest

clinic that can test you, that is really important. Then when you're out and about, do your best to maintain that social distance where you can, and where you can't, put a mask on. So, I am asking people, when you go to these venues that we're now increasing the capacity to 100 per cent, whether they be indoor seated ticketed events, the State of Origin, or at the Gabba any of those places, it is a really good idea to just put a mask on while you're going to the venue. Then when you're sat down in your seat – and we know where that will be if we have to contact trace – if you feel more comfortable take it off or leave it on, if you're getting up to go out to the toilet or to go and buy something to eat or drink, you might like to pop it back on again. But at the end of the evening, put it back on and then wear it, particularly to leave because we know we have those choke points where everyone gathers to leave, and then on public transport. That is just a thing I think we should all get in the habit of doing, not because I am worried at the moment about virus circulating, I am not, I think Queensland is probably – I can't say absolutely – but probably not got virus circulating, but there will come a time when we will have virus circulating again, that is going to happen, of course it is, and we should be prepared for that. And if we look around the world, those countries that have probably done the best are those countries that have a tradition of wearing masks all the time, they're out there, when they've got any concerns at all, they have a mask and we've seen that in a lot of countries that have done exceptionally well. I think we need to, as a culture, start thinking about masks. I keep one in my handbag, so a face mask, one of those flat surgical ones, or one of those that you can put in the washing machine and wash, one of those reusable ones, either of those, whatever people are comfortable with, and a bit of hand sanitizer, and wash your hands frequently. And I think, it doesn't sound a lot, but it means an awful lot. Masks, hand sanitizer, keeping your distance where you can, and most importantly of all, stay home when you're sick and get yourself tested.

REPORTER:

Why is it more important to wear a mask if you're entering or leaving a stadium and not when you're sitting right next to someone?

DR YOUNG:

Because when you're sitting next to someone, you're sitting next to one person, or two people, or in front, but you've got a limited number of people and we know where you're sitting because it is a ticketed event, so we know you're in that seat so we can easily contact trace, as we do on planes – two rows in front, two rows behind, two rows either side, so that is a pretty straight forward thing. But, when you're going into those queues to get in, and some of them only have two entry points into the venue, you can imagine there is thousands of people all coming together, you have no idea who you've been in contact with. So, we don't really want to go out and have to contact trace 40,000 people, that is not effective, that is silly, so we really want to minimize that risk. So it is when you're entering and leaving, but as I said, when you get up and leave your seat to go to the bathrooms or to go and buy some food or drink, pop it on then, that is probably a good time as well.

REPORTER:

Just very briefly while you're still there, have you given exemption to the Channel Nine commentary team for the Origin on Wednesday night?

DR YOUNG:

No.

REPORTER:

Will there be one given?

DR YOUNG:

Well I would to allow them to come into the state, and I frequently have, but they will have to quarantine in a hotel for 14 days.

REPORTER:

With the outdoor dancing do you have to socially distance?

DR YOUNG:

If you can socially distance Lydia when you're dancing, go for it.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Excellent.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It is up to people.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Of course they do. But remember, outside is much, much, much safer than inside. We know that. We've got the evidence for that. That's why, at this stage, I've advised that I think outdoor dancing is something we should try and see how that goes and then decide what we do about indoor dancing. So all of this has been stepped and this is the next step.

REPORTER:

Would there be any impact on things like school graduations next week or anything like that?

DR YOUNG:

Well they can now have one person per two square metres rather than one per four and as many seats as they can get into their auditoriums they can fill.

REPORTER:

And Premier, just on the borders – there's still an aspiration to open, when will we get that confirmation?

PREMIER:

At the end of the month but Victoria's looking very positive. You might want to get the health advice from Dr Young. But Victoria's looking very positive and I think from memory New South Wales has had four or six days without community transmission so that's looking positive as well.

REPORTER:

For the people who are wanting to book Christmas holidays and that kind of thing coming from Sydney....

PREMIER:

Well we'll be determining it at the end of the month. It's looking incredibly positive at the moment and our roadmap is very clear that we will be moving to a hot spots program still.

REPORTER:

So hold off the bookings until probably the end of the month or [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well they could book and then at the end of the month then they can...pay the rest of their deposit. How does that sound?

REPORTER:

Sorry Premier, you talk about Victoria being incredibly encouraging, does that include Greater Sydney?

PREMIER:

Well I might get Dr Young because Dr Young is the one who provides the advice but both are looking quite encouraging at the moment. We're monitoring the waste water in some parts of New South Wales, is that correct? Yes. Dr Young?

DR YOUNG:

So Victoria's had their last unlinked case on the 29th of October and they've now gone for 14 days with no community acquired cases at all. So they are looking really good to be able to open on the 1st of December but we've got to wait. There's a reason why it's 28 days before making that decision. So...although looking really good, we just have to decide at the end of the month and look at where they are then but it is looking very good. Similarly, New South Wales their last unlinked case was on the 5th of November and they've now had 6 days of absolutely no cases acquired in the community. So that's starting to look encouraging but you might have also seen that their sewage testing has turned up some virus in south-western Sydney and they've gone out and asked people to come forward and get tested. Now we still don't know what sewage positive test actually mean. We're still working that through. We know that people can excrete virus for quite a long time but it's a signal. When you've had

weeks of no positive virus particles found in sewage and then you get some, then it could be because someone – and we don't track people, once people leave our care so we say they're no longer infectious we don't track where they go – so they could very well be going to these places and continue to shed virus. So it's not a risk to anyone that they're shedding the virus but it does mean it shows up in the sewage. So there's those things going on. But New South Wales has got really good systems in place for looking and trying to find any cases so it's really encouraging as well where they're up to.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, just on the bars and restaurants – so one person per two square metres, is that likely to be the maximum amount? You won't [inaudible] further in terms of [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Not this month.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I don't think we'll be making any further this month. So that'll happen on the 17th of November.

REPORTER:

You mentioned you'd review indoor dancing and borders at the end of the month, is there anywhere else that we can go in terms of easing restrictions [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Possibly. Yes, yes there is. Because I think the next step will be when the whole of Australia is pretty well virus free. Because then the risk substantially decrease. If we've got really good tight international borders which we do and good quarantine processes there then the risk is a lot less. Because at the moment, although our borders are closed to areas with cases, we know that we'll still potentially get some transmission occurring. So once there's no virus circulating in the community in Australia I think it'll be time to review where we are.

REPORTER:

Premier, did you have any direct contact with Gladys Berejiklian throughout National Cabinet today or have you agreed...

PREMIER:

We all talk at National Cabinet.

REPORTER:

But did you agree to have a chat with each other about borders at all?

PREMIER:

No. No. I think everyone's working very cooperatively together. I think the Prime Minister made that very clear as well. Okay? Alright, thanks everyone. Thank you. Have a nice weekend.

REPORTER:

And you.

PREMIER:

I plan too.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young and Health Minister Yvette D'Ath

Date: Monday 16 November 2020

Duration: 14 minutes 40 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

...Cabinet meeting here, we are just going to give a health update and we'll be discussing other issues later on today after the Cabinet meeting. So first of all, good morning Queensland and it's wonderful to be here on the Sunshine Coast in Caloundra with more good news for Queensland, and that is we've had zero cases again overnight which is wonderful, only eight active cases, and now it has been 63 days since Queensland had its last case of community transmission. So Queenslanders are doing an extraordinary job, so well done. But remember, if you are sick, stay at home and get tested.

I've just had a briefing with the Chief Health Officer, the Health Minister and also other key representatives of the State Government, and we are concerned about the cluster outbreak that we have seen in Adelaide at the moment. And I think... we wish them all the very best and we know that they've got really good systems in place, but that does pose concern to us as large numbers of flights do come in to Queensland from Adelaide. So what the Chief Health Officer has suggested to us and we have taken that advice is that the city of Adelaide will become a hotspot, and that will take effect from 11.59pm tonight. And for those people who have arrived today, we're asking them to get tested and basically to stay where they are because we're concerned about the outcomes of that testing. And we hope everything does go well in Adelaide, but we do need to have these directions in place and we'll be monitoring it very closely and the Chief Health Officer will also be attending meetings nationally about that as well. I mean, I think everyone acknowledges, in Queensland, we have had extraordinary success rates, and the last thing we want to see is Queenslanders having to go into any form of lockdown. All of our systems have worked extremely well, but this cluster outbreak is of concern. It's not like the cluster outbreaks we've had in Queensland, but we do really hope that Adelaide does get on top of that very, very quickly. So look, I'll hand over to Dr Young and then Yvette, and then of course Dr Young will be getting further information during the day. But we do want to give people in Adelaide that notice about that, so that's from 11.59pm tonight they will then have to go into mandatory hotel quarantine if they were coming into Queensland. And like I said, we'll be monitoring this on a daily basis. Dr Young?

DR YOUNG:

So, no new cases in Queensland overnight, so we have eight active cases in Queensland. So that is very good. The biggest issue we're now facing is this outbreak that's happened in

Adelaide. So yesterday they announced that they had four cases, and now today that's up to 17 cases. So as a result of that, while we work out what's happening there and what we can do to manage our response to that, I have recommended that all of Adelaide – the city of Adelaide and those local government areas – be made a hotspot and as of 11.59pm tonight anyone who comes into Queensland who has been in that part of South Australia since Monday of last week will need to go into hotel quarantine for 14 days. I'm also asking that anyone who's arrived in Queensland who has been in Adelaide since Monday of last week to immediately come forward and get themselves tested and go into quarantine wherever they are. So if they're in their home here in Queensland because they're returning residents, or if they're visiting or if they're on holidays, that they isolate themselves from other people until it's been 14 days since they left Adelaide. Now this important while we work out what this means – that's a very rapid increase in cases from four to 17, and some of those cases, I understand, have been in complex situations; one in a prison for instance, there's been a school involved. So we need to get more information about where the risks are. But that's the situation that's happening now so that it's really important that people who are currently in Adelaide know that if they're coming into Queensland that they'll be going into quarantine for 14 days. Thank you.

REPORTER:

After [inaudible] at 11.59, so if they come before that, they're alright?

DR YOUNG:

No, if they come before that, they need to immediately – because they are already in the air – those people have already made bookings, they've already organised to come so I am saying to those people, when you arrive, you need to go and get yourself tested and we've already started speaking to people at the three airports that we know we've got flights coming into today in Queensland. So they've already been told as they've come off flights that they need to go and get themselves tested and they will need to quarantine for 14 days.

REPORTER:

In a hotel?

DR YOUNG:

In whatever accommodation. So if they're Queenslanders returning back home after visiting Adelaide, then they can go into their own accommodation, they should isolate themselves in their own accommodation from other people in that accommodation. If they're coming to visit friends, or coming to stay in a place, then similarly they should quarantine themselves from anyone else, that is what they need to do.

REPORTER:

So after 11.59 then, you will have to go into hotel quarantine at your own expense? So anyone arriving before that can just do it at home?

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

And those that have arrived before 11.59, but might have been in Adelaide last Monday must immediately go into self-isolation until next Monday, another seven days?

DR YOUNG:

That is correct.

REPORTER:

So 14 days [inaudible]

REPORTER:

Do they get tested as well?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So I am saying that everyone, whether or not you've got symptoms, so anyone who has been in Adelaide since Monday of last week – so seven days ago – anyone who has been in Adelaide should go and get themselves tested at one of our clinics throughout the state.

REPORTER:

So they will obviously... there will be negative tests amongst those people you are telling to self-isolate I imagine as well, if those tests come back negative, they still must isolate for that 14 day period regardless of those results?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, the incubation period is 14 days.

REPORTER:

I think Origin was in Adelaide the week before last, would you be urging those Queenslanders who came back to check their symptoms?

DR YOUNG:

No, because that was before last Monday. I think it is unlikely that virus was circulating prior to last Monday, I think that is a very cautious timeframe. So we heard of the first case yesterday, there has been second generation spread from what we've been able to work out. So I think people who were in Adelaide prior to last Monday are probably fine, but of course, if they or anyone in Queensland gets any symptoms at all, it is always important to come forward and get tested. I mean, we all know that Adelaide and South Australia has done a fantastic job. It is many, many, many months since they've had a community acquired case, so it can happen at any time with no notice, which is why it is really important that anyone who has any symptoms at any time comes forward and gets tested, and now anyone who has been to Adelaide and develops symptoms, it is even more important that they come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

You do have a stadium that will be at 100 per cent capacity on Wednesday, do you still think that was the right... I mean we didn't know about this then, is that still the right call, and would you make that [inaudible] with the information you have now?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, because we know where the issue is, it is Adelaide. We are asking people to quarantine who've been there, we also have all the information. Remember today in Queensland we are in a very, very different situation to what we were like in March, so we know all the people who've come into our state from Adelaide, so we are going to be able to contact them all and make sure they get themselves tested.

REPORTER:

Are you concerned at all about that game now, given that flights from Adelaide are arriving as we speak?

DR YOUNG:

No, I am not concerned because we have that information, we can use it. We also have information of who has arrived by road or by air and we will be able to work with those people.

REPORTER:

And Dr Young, if New South Wales and Victoria decide not to close up to Adelaide, will that affect whether or not we in Queensland open our borders to them?

DR YOUNG:

It depends on whether they start seeing cases, so if New South Wales and Victoria start seeing cases in their communities, wherever they've come from, whether they've come from Adelaide or from anywhere else, then of course we would make a decision about whether or not we have to declare further hotspots.

REPORTER:

Does Queensland Health have any exemptions in place for international medical retrieval services [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Right...we do have processes in place for retrieval services...it's the same process that we have for airline crew so that they are regarded as part of the crew. So anyone can go overseas to retrieve someone and then bring them back to Australia and then they need to quarantine in their own home for 14 days after that, so it's the same process. It has been in place now since March/April this year.

REPORTER:

Seeing these cases in Adelaide does that prompt us here in Queensland to re-double our efforts or how hotel quarantine has been handled, security around it and when people can leave [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

So in Queensland we did make a decision fairly early on that we would move people out of our hotels into hospital when they test positive, whereas in other states they have used medi-hotels to manage people. I don't know if that is the risk that has led to this possible outbreak, there has been no confirmation that this stage from South Australia as to where this case was acquired. It's a possibility that has been suggested. So, in Queensland we have always been more cautious in terms of moving people out. So we have had for instance our most recent cases which were diagnosed one of our hotels had been moved into hospital to be treated. So that's one thing. Then the other thing that we have considered for some time is the need to test workers who are working in those hotels whether they be police or healthcare workers, and we've recommended to them that they regularly get tested. So we do have some good solid processes in place to make sure that our hotels that are quarantining people are as safe as possible for the workers in those hotels and for our broader community.

REPORTER:

If those cases escaped hotel quarantine could Adelaide become the next Victoria do you think?

DR YOUNG:

It's too early to say that – far too early – we need to see how things work through... they've acted very quickly of course.

REPORTER:

Do we know how many people from Adelaide have come to Queensland since Monday last week?

DR YOUNG:

I think it's around about 7000 or so but I don't have the exact figure.

REPORTER:

What would it take to undesignated... to change the designation from Adelaide so obviously coming in at 11.59pm tonight... what does Adelaide have to do for the hotspot to be lifted?

DR YOUNG:

So we need as what has been done with all the other hotspot declarations, we need to see 28 days of no unlinked community transmission.

REPORTER:

And that 28 days will be reached after the end of the month review, so before Christmas if it does. Does that mean we could have that review before Christmas if they made it to 28 days to allow people to see each other for Christmas?

DR YOUNG:

We are day two of a new outbreak – I think it's far too early to be discussing any of those issues.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] end of the month review?

DR YOUNG:

We are day two. This has gone very rapidly from four to 17 cases. Let's work out what it is, what it means and what we need to do. But here in Queensland of course we have acted very, very quickly to keep the Queensland community safe.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

I'll just see if Yvette wants to add something, then we're going to Cabinet and then we'll see everyone after Cabinet.

MINISTER D'ATH:

Thanks Premier. Look very quickly the message is clear – anyone who has been in Adelaide since Monday the 9th of November, we ask that you go get tested immediately and self-quarantine. From 11.59pm this evening anyone who arrives who has been in Adelaide since Monday the 9th will need to go into mandatory hotel quarantine. Now is the time for everyone in Queensland to be vigilant and make sure that if they have got any symptoms they get tested. But importantly, I am asking for businesses and venues and organisations who should be registering peoples' details to do so. This is more important than ever because if we have any case we need to be able to trace it and trace it quickly. So we're asking businesses because we are starting to see a bit of complacency in the community. It's not just the obligation of the individual themselves, but of the business and organisation... make sure people are checking and you are collecting details that we can track this. We have had people arriving from Adelaide, even today in Brisbane, Cairns and Gold Coast. So we need to be vigilant right across Queensland and we are calling on everyone who has been in Adelaide since the 9th of November that is in Queensland to get tested today and to self-quarantine. Thanks.

PREMIER:

Thanks everyone.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Health Minister Yvette D’Ath
Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Topic: COVID-19 update

Date: 19 November 2020

Duration: 22 minutes 37 seconds

E&OE

MINISTER D’ATH:

So we have seen in Queensland three new cases in the last 24 hours. All of these cases are overseas acquired and detected in hotel quarantine. That brings our total active cases in Queensland to 12. 1190 cases in total since we started. We’re very pleased that since Monday we have seen an increase take-up of testing and we had over 7000 tests yesterday. That is wonderful because that shows that our message is getting out to the community, not just about people feeling unwell should get tested, but importantly we expect that many of these tests have been from people who have travelled from Adelaide to Queensland since the 9th of November. The great news is all of these tests have come back negative so far, so we’re very pleased with that.

We certainly understand how difficult it is for South Australia right now. The decision yesterday made by the Chief Health Officer and the Premier was a very significant decision to go into a full lockdown for the next six days. We understand that that decision was to act quickly to try to contain the virus. South Australian Premier himself said that they are in the early stages of a very nasty cluster. So the decision that the Palaszczuk Government made on Monday, acting on the advice of the Dr Young here in Queensland, to immediately quarantine and ask for all people returning from Adelaide or coming from Adelaide to Queensland be tested and to quarantine was the right decision and we stand by that decision. I’m very disappointed to see criticism from the Federal Government, from the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt, from Karen Andrews and Matt Canavan, criticising the decision that we made. And my question to all of them is whether they still stand by those comments that they have made in the last 48 hours now that South Australia has made the decision that they have. We see the Federal Government single Queensland out in their criticism again, despite the fact that similar decisions have been made by South Australia... sorry by Western Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia in relation to their borders.

In relation to hotel quarantine, we believe we have one of the strongest systems in the country. What we do here is, as a matter of practice when someone is tested positive in hotel quarantine, we move them into our hospitals unlike other jurisdictions that regularly continue to have those positive residents kept in their hotels. We believe this has strengthened our hotel quarantine response. But we are going to go a step further and we will from early next week start testing our staff in hotel quarantine on a weekly basis. So particularly our police

and the health workers who come in who work with those individuals in hotel quarantine and to support them, we want to make sure that they're tested regularly as well. So this will further strengthen our hotel quarantine. We will also be talking with the hotel sector in relation to other staff that are directly employed with the hotel, but they have a lot less contact if any contact at all with those people who are actually in those hotel quarantines. So our key priority is those who are directly in contact with those individuals.

I've also seen some comments from the Manager of Opposition Business, the Member for Kawana Jarrod Bleijie attacking individual decisions being made by Queensland Health around COVID plans. And I've also seen this morning some recent comments and jokes made by Dale Last about going holidaying in South Australia. I don't think this is the time for criticism or jokes. We have a new Leader of the Opposition David Crisafulli who should show leadership. I have yet to hear the Leader of the Opposition back in the decision of the Queensland Government based on the health advice and back in Queenslanders to keep them safe. We have been able to significantly ease restrictions this week for Queenslanders. We have done that because we have taken the advice and acted swiftly in all of the decisions that we have made, and I would expect, based on David Crisafulli's comments that he's not going to criticise for criticism's sake, remaining silent is just as bad. Back in Queensland and back in Queenslanders and support our health system by supporting these decisions. I'll hand over to the Chief Health Officer and then happy to take some questions.

DR YOUNG:

So three new cases overnight in Queensland, all three acquired overseas and all three detected in hotel quarantine and all three have now been moved to hospital for management. And this is really important. So we've now seen the world tick over more than 56 million cases, so we expect to see more cases in hotel quarantine going forward, so we have decided that we will start testing staff who have direct contact with people who are in hotel quarantine, just as another level of assurance that we're managing that risk.

REPORTER:

The 12 active cases, how of those are in hospital and how many are in [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

They're all in hospital. Yes.

REPORTER:

Are any of them in intensive care?

DR YOUNG:

No.

REPORTER:

Are you concerned with our hotel quarantine capacity? Do we have capacity to take more international arrivals and [inaudible] people from South Australia?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we do. So as soon as the border was closed to South Australia, South Australians heard that and they stopped coming immediately. So that's all fine.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Adelaide [inaudible] South Australia as a whole?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. You're absolutely correct. 77 per cent of people in South Australia live in Adelaide and that's the hotspot that has been declared. So it's Adelaide city and the surrounding local government areas, there's 20 of them in total, and we have not seen any spread to date outside of Adelaide, and now that the South Australian Government has restricted all movement at least for the next six days we don't expect that there'll be any risk. So we're fine with people coming from outside Adelaide and those 20 LGAs to Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is there anybody in our system who has had a job outside of hotel quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

There will be health workers who work in those quarantine hotels and also work in the health system, but they do know of course how to use PPE and how to manage that. The security in Queensland is provided by QPS and they work, the vast majority of cases, just in one single quarantine hotel. Occasionally they might have to work a shift in another one of the quarantine hotels just because of operational reasons, but otherwise that's where they work.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

At the end of the month, yes.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

It was a fantastic outcome for Queensland, it was a brilliant game and it was good to see so many people coming together and celebrating because that's what we should be doing. At the end of this year – we've all had a really, really difficult year so we should be celebrating with our friends, our families and our communities. There are some restrictions still in place that we should take notice of. The most important thing though that we must all continue to do that is absolutely critical is if we get any symptoms at all, doesn't matter what they are, just come forward immediately and get tested. We have a turnaround time now of about 24 hours or less so it means you give up one day while you need to go into isolation in your own home or wherever you are, but it means that we can then pick up the case. I'm sure that South Australia is ever so glad that that older lady who turned up at the Lyell McEwin Hospital got tested and that's how they found out about their outbreak. They hadn't had transmission in

their community for many, many, many months so no one was expecting it when it happened but they managed it, they got onto it really, really quickly and that was through testing someone with minimal symptoms. So we need to do that in Queensland. It's so important. If we can find the first case in a cluster, we can get on top of it really quickly and then go back to where we were, otherwise it could drag out for many months to get on top of it. So please...

REPORTER:

Is Queensland Health doing any extra follow up work off the back of last night's Origin game? Like would you be doing any... contacting people, any extra testing?

DR YOUNG:

No, no. There's no need to. The same thing – if anyone who attended that match, no different to anywhere else in Queensland, develops any symptoms come forward and get tested. Really important.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Only if they get symptoms. So it'll now go to every seven days – a bit like we've done for freight workers. So for quite some time now we've asked freight workers to get tested every seven day whether or not they've had symptoms. If they have symptoms, get tested immediately, but if they don't have symptoms every seven days. They don't have to remain in isolation or quarantine until they get the result. So just every seven days they need to get tested.

REPORTER:

Are you aware of any breaches at the Origin? Were there any COVID breaches at the Origin you're aware of?

DR YOUNG:

No. No.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, you did give that directive for everyone to wear masks for the duration of the game. We saw last night that...

DR YOUNG:

No. No, it wasn't for the duration of the game. I did recommend that as people arrived and left – because that is where the chokepoints are, that's where you've got lots of different people milling together – that it would be a good idea to wear a mask. But to be honest with everyone, Queenslanders are really, really good at working out when there are risks and when there aren't. I don't believe we've got virus circulating in Queensland today. We acted very

quickly to reduce that risk that was a potential risk from South Australia, so I think it was a reasonable thing that people chose not to wear masks.

But what I would like to see is I would like everyone in Queensland to make sure that they have got some masks so that if we were to have something happen, like has happened in South Australia, I could immediately go out and say, "Right, it's now time for everyone to put a mask on when they leave their house." So if that ever needs to happen, it would be good that people have already got masks. So it is very easy to go out and buy those flat surgical masks. You can get them in many, many places. Equally so, a lot of people have actually sewn some very, quite pretty masks. So any surgical masks – that's a flat surgical mask – or one of those ones that have been handmade with those three layers would be fine. So it would be a good time for everyone just to go and make sure they've got some ready if they are needed in the future.

REPORTER:

Should people be concerned about surface contact, I guess? And are we doing enough to prevent that in Queensland, just in terms of what is happening in the states?

DR YOUNG:

Surface, fomite travel?

REPORTER:

Yeah, contact through [inaudible] rather from touching different surfaces?

DR YOUNG:

Yeah, it is always a possibility that fomites could spread the virus. So that's when someone coughs on a surface, the virus lands there and then someone else comes along and touches that and touches their face. That's why it is really, really important to just wash your hands all the time. Soap and water is always best, but if you don't have soap and water that hand sanitiser, which I always have a bottle of in my handbag, if you've got that close to hand use that. Just continually do that. And of course, do it before you eat. I mean, we need to go back to the days when you always washed your hands prior to sitting down for a meal, for instance. That is important. The majority of spread, we know, actually occurs through face-to-face. That is the majority of spread, but it can occur through fomite.

REPORTER:

Do you know how many people are testing [inaudible] outside hotel quarantine [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

No, because we have just got to consult with the hotel industry about who's actually having contact, because at this stage we are not letting hotel workers go into the rooms. So hopefully they are not having contact. We just have to work through the risk. But the highest risk is actually police.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] Do you know if it's hundreds or thousands of [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We just have to work it through, how many hotels and how many people.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] the situation in South Australia [inaudible]. Has that strain of the virus made it here?

DR YOUNG:

I don't think it is a different strain. It will be a different sub-lineage. I suspect it will be fairly similar when all said and done. To South Australia's credit, they have got on to this very quickly and they have got very good contact tracing, so they are testing people very early – many of them before they even develop symptoms. So that's why it looks like it's rapidly transmitting. But I actually think they are really, really, very, very good systems that are picking up. We can't really say whether this strain or sub-lineage is any more infectious or spreading any more rapidly until we have got a few more generations, and we can look at it. They are just being extremely cautious, very appropriately so.

REPORTER:

Just on that, if we were to see say about two dozen cases of that sub-lineage strain in Queensland, do you anticipate that as a [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Well, we have already gone through this with our own incident, which was the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre cluster. And because we had really, really good COVID-safe plans in place I didn't feel the need to do it. So it depends on the circumstance as to what we would do. But it is really important that everyone keeps those COVID-safe plans, keeps them there ready to immediately put in place if there was a requirement because I think that would be far better for everyone, rather than having to go into that really harsh lockdown. It would just depend on the circumstances.

REPORTER:

[Inaudible] testing of hotel quarantine. Is that a direct result from South Australia's [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We have actually been considering it in Queensland for quite a while and I've had those conversations with the Police Commissioner, that it would be a wise thing for us to do. So we have been considering it for a while. But now, this has given us that extra push that we think it's a sensible time to start.

REPORTER:

Given that Adelaide has gone in with this hard six-day model, if they get the end of the end of their six-day lockdown and they don't have any more cases, is that then likely for you to reopen the borders?

DR YOUNG:

It depends. This is very, very early in their outbreak. We've just got to see how things progress and what happens. I think it is too early to be making any prophecies about what we might or mightn't do.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, you said it is reasonable for people to make that decision not to wear masks at the entrance and at the end [inaudible] of the State of Origin. In light of what happened in South Australia, wouldn't it be best to be able to front [inaudible] preventative, rather than wait until the virus [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

I'm always preventative, absolutely. And that is why we close down borders very quickly when there is a risk. And I do think that is a better way to do it. I think you should stop the cases coming into the state, rather than ask 5.1 million people to go and do something. So I genuinely believe we should minimise the risk. So we've got hotel quarantine processes in place for people who still need to come into the state, and that's happening for people from South Australia and also from overseas. It is a better way of doing it because although masks are good, and we should all start getting used to thinking about using them and being prepared to use them, they are not absolute. Whereas stopping an infected person coming into the state and getting into our community is an absolute.

REPORTER:

So you are that confident taht [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes. There is always going to be a risk but I think the risk is very, very small.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, no...unless you're unwell. If they're unwell, like anyone else they should immediately get tested and isolate until they get a result. But if they're perfectly well then we're just doing this as a cautionary step. No different to how we did it for freight workers. We don't require freight workers to go into isolation when they get tested.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

Sure...and I'll get the Chief Health Officer to address that as well. But there are distinctions between all of these scenarios, and I have heard a lot of different examples of why the footy in an outdoor stadium versus other different scenarios. And it is about knowing every single

person in the room. Knowing that they're staying in the same seat. That we know exactly if we needed to we could contact 50,000 people who attended the stadium last night quite quickly and easily. But it's also about whether it's outdoors or indoors and we know that outdoors there is a lot less risk. Also, can I just say and I know there has already been some directions easing some of those restrictions in relation to parents dropping off their Preppy at the start of the new school year and everything else...we do ask for all organisations to go back and review their COVID plans in light of the easing of restrictions. Because what we are seeing is decisions being made that may actually not be in line with the new directives, and so there are restrictions being put in place and decisions made by organisations and businesses that don't need to be there because they're still operating off their own older plans. But since 4pm on Tuesday the 17th we have actually eased some of those restrictions. So the specific one about formals and parents attending I will ask the Chief Health Officer to quickly address.

DR YOUNG:

The Minister is actually just covered it yes. So I have also asked everyone to look at their COVID-safe plans. I commend everyone...the work they've done to develop those plans has been amazing. Now, they've got to undo that work so there's a lot of work there. But yes, there is nothing wrong with people attending a graduation ceremony if it's seated and ticketed, nothing wrong with 100 per cent capacity. But each school has got to work that out, and you have got to remember different schools have had different things in place, this has happened with minimal notice so they might have already sent out tickets and they can't change it. But they'll work that through. They've all done a very good job.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

The only problem with that is my understanding is that those Schoolies events are 50,000 at somewhere like the beach – they're not ticketed/seated. So you'll get 50,000 kids all milling and mingling and it's a different scenario so they unfortunately still can't go ahead. Those really big mass events where you don't quite know who's there, and you don't know who is inter-mingling.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

I think it's fair the Premier has stated that I'll be the Leader of the House so...

REPORTER:

My next question was [inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

So, the great news based on the decision around allocated seating events is that all 93 members will be able to sit in parliament. I think this is great for democracy, it means we can function in a much more normal environment. There still will be some restrictions of course in areas like - just as we heard about the footy last night – areas where we may mill around as far as people getting into lifts, social distancing...all of those sorts of restrictions will still be in place but when it comes to sitting in the parliament because we all have fixed seating, allocated seat in the parliament we will be able to attend and that's going to be great for particularly the new members who will be arriving and attending their first parliament next week. I think that's all. Anything else? All good. Thank-you.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPO

Engagement: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier
Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer
Yvette D’Ath, Minister for Health
Steven Miles, Deputy Premier

Date: 24 November 2020

Duration: 17mins

E&OE

PREMIER:

Well good morning Queensland. And of course, in good news today we only have one new case in Queensland which was acquired in hotel quarantine from overseas and we are expecting to see more of those because we know that there’s a lot of COVID out there in the Northern Hemisphere and as people are returning back to Australia and Queensland we’re expecting to see more of that. We currently have 15 active cases and in the past 24 hours there’s been more than 5300 tests. So that’s, once again, really good news. And once again, if you’re sick stay at home, get tested. And we’ve got to keep up those testing rates Queensland because as Dr Young says, we need to find that first case if we are going to maintain to be on top of this.

Well today I have great news for Queensland and also really good news with what’s been happening in other states. So, today I had a meeting with Dr Young and of course, the Deputy Premier and the Health Minister and Dr Young has been in extensive conversations with the New South Wales Chief Officer. Dr Young is now satisfied that they have reached over the 28 days so can I say to New South Wales – we welcome you to Queensland from the 1st of December. We know how tough this has been on families. This is a great day, it’s exciting news and it has met the requirements that Dr Young has set.

In further good news, tomorrow is the day that Victoria will meet that threshold as well. So I will update everybody again tomorrow morning. I have been in contact with both the New South Wales Premier and the Victorian Premier and I’ve advised also the Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews that if they reach that 28 days tomorrow then they too will be open on the 1st of December. We are in contact with the airlines. We know how important it is that the airlines are able to plan. People are able to plan for their holidays as well. And Queensland is good to go. We absolutely want to see our tourism industry continue to flourish and prosper. It might be a little bit difficult getting some accommodation somewhere because of our successful campaign a lot of tourism operators are saying that they are booked out. But we do want to encourage families to get together before Christmas. This has always been the aspiration of the National Cabinet. And as I’ve always said, my number one priority is to

keep Queenslanders safe and we always act on the advice of Dr Young and that is exactly what we have done today.

And in relation to South Australia, that will be reviewed at the end of the month. As we do know, there is the cluster down there that Dr Young does have some concerns with, but we will update everyone again at the end of the month. So from the 1st of December, if all things are going well for Victoria, tomorrow both New South Wales and Victoria will be open for Queensland. Queensland families can travel there and vice versa from the 1st of December. I hope this is welcome news. I think it's great news in the lead-up to Christmas, but once again, that timely reminder for everybody - we need to make sure that we continue to keep up our social distancing. Our good hand hygiene as well. That is really important. But once again, thank you everyone, and can I pay special tribute to Dr Young and her team and to both Steven Miles and Yvette D'Ath for the great work that they have done as well in to keeping Queenslanders safe. I'll hand over to Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

So, one new case in Queensland overnight and that was an overseas traveller who is in hotel quarantine. We are seeing more and more cases in hotel quarantine and that's to be expected as we see the case numbers elsewhere in the world continue to rise. But, having them in hotel quarantine means that we protect Queenslanders. Now, it is 28 days since New South Wales had an unlinked case. So all of their cases since then have been linked and able to be traced back to known outbreaks, known clusters, which means that we can reopen our border to New South Wales on the 1st of December which was always in our planning going forward. And hopefully we will be doing exactly the same thing for Victoria and we'll see their case numbers today and tomorrow and be able to make that announcement. South Australia - we're still waiting to see how their outbreak unfolds. It's been really good so far. They've had only small numbers. They're up to 27 yesterday. We just have to see what happens in that first incubation period. So we were first notified of the case around ten days ago on that Saturday, so we now have to see what other cases come out of that. They've had a really good rapid response down there. So they had another case yesterday which was eight days after that person had been exposed. So we just need to wait for a little bit longer before we can decide what needs to happen. All of their cases to date have been linked. They've been able to trace them back to that reach in their hotel quarantine process, so that is very good news.

The important thing though – and I am positive that every Queenslander knows this – the important thing is to recognise that this virus is circulating throughout the world, that the case numbers are increasing. We are very safe here because of our international border restrictions, but it could happen at any time. It was so unexpected when they got that case in South Australia, and their hospital system down there is to be commended that they picked up that case so quickly, who presented to one of their emergency departments. So, we have to do the same here in Queensland, I have every confidence we will. Any cough, cold, snuffle, sore throat, please, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, any symptom anywhere in the state, we don't know what might've been the cause, please just come forward and get tested. And it is wonderful to see the large numbers of Queenslanders still coming forward, that is so critical because if you find the first case in an outbreak, we can get on top of it very, very quickly and not have to do all those closedowns that none of us want to see. So please, everyone, just come forward if

you have any symptoms, that is very, very important. And, isolate yourself until you get the result. Thank you.

MINISTER D'ATH:

Thank you. Well today is day 70. Day 70 since Queensland had its last locally acquired COVID case in the community, and that is due to the incredible leadership of the Premier and also the Chief Health Officer and the amazing health team, and I want to acknowledge the incredible work of the Deputy Premier as the previous health minister as well. This is in stark contrast to what we are seeing around the world. Millions of cases, we are seeing a significant escalation of the number of positive cases around the world, and sadly, a significant escalation of the number of deaths every day. Queensland, with the announcement today of lifting our borders to New South Wales, and hopefully lifting our borders to Victoria tomorrow from the 1st of December, can only happen because of the incredible work of the people of Queensland following the advice and directions that we've put in place.

We need to all understand though, that we need to keep doing this because with the restrictions of the borders being lifted, and the easing of restrictions that we announced on the 17th of November, the fact is Queensland will have some of the lowest restrictions in the country. Compared to New South Wales – although New South Wales is opening its borders earlier – New South Wales have far more restrictions across the entire community of New South Wales, including businesses, compared to Queensland. Our businesses are able to operate at double the capacity of many businesses in New South Wales. More people can be in their homes, more people at weddings and funerals and especially more people at stadiums and cinemas and events in the arts space. That is because Queenslanders have done an incredible job, so now what we ask of Queenslanders is to keep up that great work. Practice good hygiene, if you are unwell you must stay home and get tested, and importantly, once you get tested, stay in quarantine until you have those results. That is critical to stay at home until you have those results.

And, to all of the venues, the businesses, the cafes, the restaurants, the pubs, the clubs and hotels, we need you to work with us to collect people's details. You are our frontline of defence now. So please, keep collecting this information. As a patron, as a Queensland, please make sure when you're going into these businesses that you are checking in your details. Our compliance and monitoring and enforcement team will be out checking. We will make sure we are out checking that we have compliance so that we can keep our economy open and we can keep easing restrictions going forward. This is a great day for Queensland and it is a great day for Queensland and our economy, but we can only do that with the great work and support of Queenslanders to keep doing what we need them to do, and this will make sure that we can support jobs and the economy going forward.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thanks so much Yvette. This indeed is a great day for Queensland and for the whole of Australia. It is a day I have been looking forward to for a very long time, and I know it is a day that many Queenslanders and their family and friends, particularly in Sydney, have been looking forward to. Queensland already has some of the most eased restrictions in the world, as well as the best COVID-19 results in the world, and that means that we have more people

getting into jobs, more businesses open, more businesses able to employ more people, getting more Queenslanders back to work, and today's announcement will mean even more of that. We know our tourism and hospitality sectors have struggled while some of our traditional sectors have held up throughout the entire pandemic, and this is a chance for particularly our tourism and hospitality sectors to get more people back to work. I know there's lots of Sydney-siders who have been wondering whether they can plan their Christmas holidays on the Gold Coast or Cairns or all of the wonderful places in between or north of there, and now we know that they can. And that means that when they come here, they'll be spending money here, creating jobs here, helping businesses here to get more people back to work. It also means that for all those business owners and business people in Sydney who've been thinking throughout the year about relocating some or all of their operations to Queensland, now we know they can, now we know we want them to so they can come here, create more jobs here because that is this Government's focus. Our initial... the foundation of our economic recovery plan was always the health response, and now that for now we have that health response under control we can do more things to encourage economic growth, to encourage businesses to employ more people, and the lifting of these border restrictions will do exactly that.

PREMIER:

Any quick questions?

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Well we'll just wait for tomorrow about Victoria, but I think everything is looking very, very good, very positive, and once again can I thank every single Queensland. Every single Queensland has played their part for us to get to this stage. So well done Queensland.

REPORTER:

What triggers lead to closing the borders again?

PREMIER:

Well I think we'd have to see a major outbreak. We have been concerned about what happened in South Australia but that's what... we need to make sure we're always vigilant, we're always watching, and of course we'll assess South Australia at the end of the month.

REPORTER:

Is there a certain number of cases [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

We'll always take the advice of Dr Young. But I think what you're seeing is we've moved now to a hotspot regime, but it depends, if there was a massive outbreak across a particular state, I think you'll see everybody react that way. But this is great news for Christmas, so fingers crossed everything stays the same.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Yeah no, she was very positive as well so it's wonderful to be back in communication with the New South Wales Premier, and I'm also in contact with the Victorian Premier, as I do on a regular basis, and that's how we all want to work. We want to work in the best interests of our states but also too we're all part of a National Cabinet and we want to work in the best interests of all of Australia as well.

REPORTER:

Parliament starting today, what can we expect in terms of the discourse in Parliament? Are you promising a polite [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well I'd hope that would be the case. From me, Patrick, what you see is what you get. But we'll see how the other side behave.

REPORTER:

Is the Government [inaudible] borrowing more [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

We said very clearly that we would be funding our economic recovery plan and that is our intention for the Budget that's handed down next week.

REPORTER:

Will there be any nasty surprises in the Budget or are you...?

PREMIER:

I don't think so. No. I think we've said very clearly we were elected to implement our economic recovery plan and that is exactly what we intend to do.

REPORTER:

Will there be any nice surprises?

PREMIER:

You'll have to wait and see.

REPORTER:

Just back to COVID, [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

We will be listening to the advice of the AHPPC and in Queensland we'll be listening to the advice of Dr Young. There has been no better health advice that has come to government than that has come via Dr Young, so I will always take her advice.

REPORTER:

Just on logistics, no more border passes [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

The police will go through that over the next few days. There may be a border pass required for people going into South Australia. Like, Queenslanders going into South Australia and returning depending on what happens at the end of the month. So I don't want to pre-empt that, but as Dr Young said there are still some concerns with South Australia, so there may be a very limited border declaration pass still needed for South Australia. But we will get back to everyone about that at the end of the month. But now is the time – if you live in New South Wales, come to Queensland, start planning that holiday. We'd love to have your business, it means jobs for Queenslanders. And as you know, Queensland, beautiful one day, perfect the net.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] that major outbreak [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

We will always listen to the AHPPC advice and the advice of Dr Young.

REPORTER:

I want to ask Dr Young a few questions.

PREMIER:

You can, then we have to go because we have a [inaudible] ceremony for Parliament.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It absolutely depends. You would have seen in South Australia how seriously they immediately took that outbreak and the restrictions they put in place. So there are so many variables here. Each particular case has got to be looked at on its merits and work out what the risk is to Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, I think we all need to have masks available so that if there were to be an outbreak people could immediately get hold of one. So this is the time to just go out and make sure that in your home you've got some masks available were they to be needed.

PREMIER:

Alright, thanks everyone.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier
Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer
Yvette D’Ath, Minister for Health
Steven Miles, Deputy Premier
Steve Gollschewski, Deputy Commissioner Queensland Police

Date: 30 November 2020

Duration: 19mins 43sec

E&OE

PREMIER:

Well good afternoon Queensland. And in more good news for Queensland overnight, we’ve had zero new cases which is again, wonderful news. We have 13 active cases and in the past 24 hours we’ve had over 1700 tests. So once again, Queenslanders are getting tested which is wonderful.

Well I’ve got a couple of announcements today in relation to some easing of restrictions and then I’ll make some comments on South Australia and then of course, I’ll hand over to Dr Young to say some things there. So in some extra good news for Queensland as of 1am tomorrow private gatherings that were limited to 50 people in places like parks will be lifted to 100 which is great news especially for those family gatherings coming up towards Christmas and the New Year. And then of course, we’ve had a lot of people who have been writing in about can they have those social photos where they’re closer together. And the answer to that is yes because it’s just a short period of time. So if you’re looking to have those school photos, those family photos it’s perfectly normal to have those photos close together. And of course tomorrow is very important because it’s the lifting of the borders between Queensland and New South Wales and Queensland and Victoria. This is great news and can I thank Queenslanders for their excellent work. Because if it wasn’t for Queenslanders we would never have been in this situation. It’s always been about keeping Queensland safe and on the advice of Dr Young it is now safe to do that. Can I also thank everybody who’s been working at our road borders as well as our airports. Because it has been a tremendous job. It has been a phenomenal job. We’ve had Police, we’ve had Health, we’ve had volunteers from QFES and everything so I just want to thank everybody who’s been part of that because every single person who has worked on our borders has played their part in keeping Queenslanders safe. So, a big thank you to everyone.

Now, in relation to South Australia I'll hand over to Dr Young but can I just say this – that Dr Young has asked for another week to further assess the situation in South Australia and I will accept that advice. We want to make sure that everything is perfectly safe when we can lift those borders. And of course, we do have that aspiration that everyone can travel freely before Christmas. So I'm just asking people to please be patient for another week so they can do some further detailed analysis about that. But of course, we've seen records of people making their bookings to come into Queensland over the Christmas and New Year holidays. School holidays is starting of course and we're seeing in some cases an increase of over 100 to 150 per cent of bookings. So Queensland's obviously the place to go for these school holidays. Back Queensland as much as you possibly can and of course, it's wonderful now to see that Queensland is safe and that we're able to lift those restrictions between Queensland and New South Wales and Queensland and Victoria. So I'll hand over to Dr Young and then Yvette and then the Deputy Premier and the Deputy Commissioner to make a few comments.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you Premier. So excellent news – no newly acquired cases in Queensland overnight, although we do have one case that we're looking at that we believe is a historic case that's recovered so we're just doing some more work with that one individual. And we are going to see more of that. As people develop their normal coughs and colds and we'll be testing them for COVID, there's a good chance we'll pick up that someone's previously had a COVID infection. So there's no concerns there at all. Now you've heard from the Premier that 100 people can now gather outside in public spaces and so they can have parties and so forth in their local park and those areas. Within people's own homes there's still a gathering limit of 50 people because of course, people want to be able to move freely indoors and outdoors when they're in their own home. So that's in place. People can start to have those celebration photos. Particularly important at the end of the year because we know that's quick and people will get together for the photo and then move apart. So that will occur. Now, we are of course opening our borders fully to New South Wales and Victoria as of 1am tomorrow morning. Although we've reviewed the situation in South Australia and it looks good – they're now at 33 cases related to that cluster – they still are continuing to have cases and continuing to have areas of concern. So most of the states and territories in Australia still have some limitation on movements from Adelaide to their state so we will continue that here in Queensland and review it again over the next week and make a decision whether we can lift all of those restrictions with South Australia. So it'll just depend what happens over the next week. Thank you.

MINISTER D'ATH:

Just very quickly – we'd like to thank all Queenslanders for their cooperation again with the restrictions in place. It has now been 13 days since we eased restrictions, significantly increasing capacity at many venues down to the one person per two square metres and also allowing 100 per cent capacity at allocated seating events such as cinemas, theatres, and also stadiums. So we thank everyone for their cooperation there. We do need to continue however to follow the advice. We thank all of those venues and I'm seeing an increased compliance on venues ensuring that they are collecting people's data. So we say thank you. That's going to be more important than ever from tomorrow when we have a lot more visitors coming into

this state from interstate. So please, all licenced venues, business keep collecting that data. Making sure that people are checking in to those venues before they take a seat. We are noticing a bit of complacency in relation to hand shaking. Can we send the message out again that we are wanting people not to shake hands. Do the elbow bump, do a hand wave – any other gesture, but please even though you’re washing your hands and your sanitising... it has kept our community safe. Not just safe from COVID, but a healthier community because we have followed these health practices. So please, I’m noticing with school awards nights and other presentations that we are seeing a bit of complacency and hand shaking happening as well so we ask that that cease and we go back to following those original directions as well. Queensland is in such a great position right now. We’ve, again, zero locally acquired cases – this is compared to over 60 million cases internationally now. Just in the United States we’ve seen over 155,000 cases in the last 24 hours. Italy is reporting over 26,000 cases, Germany over 13,000 and the UK over 12,000. So these are serious escalations, second and third waves happening in many countries. We want to make sure that’s not happening here in Queensland and so we really ask everyone to comply with the instructions that we’re given so that we can all have a wonderful Christmas and we can keep our economy open and keep us COVID-safe.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Queensland’s health-led economic recovery is set to really take off tomorrow and with that will come more jobs for Queenslanders. This is not just a reward for Queenslanders for our hard work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic but also our southern neighbours, those in New South Wales and Victoria, who have done a fantastic job also suppressing the virus in their state. The Brisbane airport expects 6000 interstate arrivals tomorrow from New South Wales and Victoria. That’s up from 2600 last Tuesday, so we’re already seeing a substantial increase. At the peak of the pandemic on the 12th of April which was Easter Sunday, they saw just 31 arrivals. That’s not 31 flights, that’s 31 people. Last year the Brisbane airport averaged nearly 50,000 passengers a day. In fact they peaked, their record day was 63,525 passengers, and so we have so much ahead of us in terms of inviting and welcoming extra visitors here and the extra economic investment that that will bring. Virgin Australia say they have 38,000 seats between now and Christmas between Victoria and Queensland, 65,000 between New South Wales and Queensland. Qantas and Jetstar have 250 flights between Sydney and Queensland per week and 160 between Melbourne and Queensland per week, and our tourism industry sources tell me that anecdotally they are already experiencing a very significant uplift in activity. One booking agent has reported a 300 per cent increase in the number of calls. One Gold Coast hotel have had to deploy 30 staff from other jobs to their phones just to take incoming phone calls. For a while now Queenslanders have had Queensland to ourselves and now we’re happy to share it with our friends from New South Wales and Victoria, friends and family from there. We have a Good to Go campaign that’s ready to go to send a message to everyone in New South Wales and Victoria that they’re welcome to come here now. We’d love to see them before Christmas, and that’s expected to inject something like \$3.5 billion dollars into the Queensland economy – more businesses open, more people in work all thanks to our fantastic health response. And as we turn over to the Deputy Commissioner, can I just note what a historic moment I am tomorrow morning will be as they remove those barricades from the Queensland-New South Wales border. Let’s hope we never have to see them again.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Hello everyone. So as you've heard from 1am tomorrow morning only those people who have been in a declared hotspot or overseas within the previous 14 days will be required to have a border declaration pass to enter Queensland. So that means anyone that's coming across from Victoria or New South Wales, in particular, which are current hotspots until tomorrow, they'll be able to travel freely across our borders and won't be impeded. Our road border checkpoints will be removed from early tomorrow morning. I should point out that some of these checkpoints include significant infrastructure, particularly those at the Gold Coast and at Goondiwindi and including some several hundred metres of concrete barriers in some instances. So it's going to take us a little while to dismantle them and get them away so motorists, particularly those on the Gold Coast tomorrow, can still expect some traffic controls in place so that we can get that undertaken safely so please work with us and be aware of that.

Adelaide remains a hotspot as you've heard, so those persons coming from there and as I said those coming from overseas need to fly into Queensland -- that's the direction -- to enter the state and also need to come with a border declaration pass and they will be placed into quarantine unless they have an exemption. So we'll be meeting all those direct flights coming out of South Australia to make sure that we get all of those persons leaving the state but also conduct random checks on other flights coming into the state. It's important to say that whilst it's almost Christmas a little bit earlier for us, it's a great outcome, that COVID is by no means finished for us, so our quarantining in Queensland will continue for the foreseeable future and everyone else in the state needs to be aware of what the Chief Health Officer's directions are because our officers will be out and about making sure that people do comply with those directions. We want to keep us where we are.

And I think the final, if I could just say, is just to remind everyone that there are fires across our state at the moment and we expect to move into wet season within the next month so please stay connected and be aware of what's happening in your community. Thank you.

REPORTER:

If I fly in from Sydney or anywhere in New South Wales or Victoria, I don't need a border pass at all?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

No. As of 1am tomorrow, no.

REPORTER:

And is it just Adelaide, or is the whole of South Australia?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

It's the declared Adelaide area, and it's the LGAs...

REPORTER:

[inaudible] South Australia regions [inaudible]?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

There's a number of LGAs or local government areas that people need to be aware of whether they're coming out of there.

REPORTER:

How many officers have been involved in the border effort?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

So this will free up around 200 officers per day to be returned to their normal duties.

REPORTER:

Sorry, to the Premier. You've advocated these end of the month border reviews [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

No, we have stuck very clearly throughout the course of this year in terms of reviewing at the end of the month, but I think what we will see in the lead up to Christmas is that Dr Young wants to review South Australia by the end of the week. So we are more than happy to comply with her advice.

REPORTER:

Steven Marshall says there are no community transmission cases in Adelaide, that they're all... they know where they're linked. Isn't that good enough?

PREMIER:

I still think... you're probably best to talk to Dr Young but her advice to me is that they are still concerned. They've got large numbers of people that have been asked to go into quarantine in their homes. But while Dr Young has concerns I think there's other jurisdictions that also share those concerns.

REPORTER:

Premier, what's your reaction to China's Olympic bid?

PREMIER:

My understanding is that is completely false.

REPORTER:

So you're not worried about it?

PREMIER:

No.

REPORTER:

Are you looking to get involved in making Queensland the pre-Olympic bubble next year to help Japan out if we're so COVID-safe?

PREMIER:

Look, my understanding is that following on from the Budget I said that I would have discussions with John Coates and I'll wait until I've had my discussions with him.

REPORTER:

Qantas has announced 330 jobs to go across Queensland, Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville – what's your reaction?

PREMIER:

Well of course that's disappointing. We don't want to see jobs go, we want to grow jobs in the economy. That's a decision for them but I think you'll see the fact that more and more flights are coming on domestically I think that's good news for the Queensland economy.

REPORTER:

Devastating blow for families three, four weeks out from Christmas isn't it?

PREMIER:

It absolutely would be devastating for them and our heart goes out to them, but these are decisions that Qantas is taking.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] COVID economic recovery that the DP was just talking about. Have we made a submission regarding opening back up to international students?

PREMIER:

My understanding is that the universities are in discussions. They are putting a proposal to the Federal Government, but we have made it very clear that there would have to be hotel quarantine and we've also made it very clear that we are actually watching how that happens in other states.

REPORTER:

Premier, do you have any idea how many [inaudible] China Queensland [inaudible] Queensland?

PREMIER:

No, but the resource industry did express to me some concern during the course of last week. I made my comments at the Resource Industry lunch as well that it is a big industry for Queensland jobs and Queensland mines around these continual trade issues, and I asked the Federal Government to look into this issue because we all need to stand united when it comes to Queensland jobs.

REPORTER:

And just on jobs, when do you expect our economy to peak?

PREMIER:

I think the Treasurer will discuss that tomorrow.

REPORTER:

Will you be adding more than \$4 billion in borrowings tomorrow?

PREMIER:

The Treasurer will outline the Budget tomorrow. Only one more sleep Patrick. Not long to go now. I know some people may be up at 1:00am watching what's happening tomorrow. I've sent Minister Mark Ryan down there to the border for 1:00am in the morning. But look, the Budget will be handed down. We said very clearly that we would implement our Unite and Recover COVID economic plan, that is exactly what we intend to do. There will be no surprises in the Budget.

REPORTER:

But you are going to borrow more than \$4 billion aren't you? Are you going to fund deficits?

PREMIER:

Let me say very clearly Patrick, and I'll say this to everyone here, our debt will be a lot, lot, lot, lower than New South Wales and Victoria.

REPORTER:

The LNP say you're breaking your promise if you are going to [inaudible] \$4 billion...?

PREMIER:

Well, they can wait to see the Budget tomorrow. I think they will see we are honouring our election commitments.

REPORTER:

On those personal photos that are allowed now, does that include Santa at shopping centres?

PREMIER:

I hope so. Does it Dr Young, or not. No.

DR YOUNG:

I don't want...

PREMIER:

Okay, maybe kids....No kids on Santa's lap, okay? Stand next to Santa. Alright, there we go [laughter].

REPORTER:

Premier, with South Australia you said "within the next week," so does that mean any day over the next seven days [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

We'll ask Dr Young. And she can clarify Santa too.

DR YOUNG:

It will be in one week that we will review what happens with South Australia.

REPORTER:

So, on just a question I asked the Premier, why are we still concerned when the South Australia Premier says there's no new transmissions, they know where all the cases have come from?

DR YOUNG:

Right. Over the weekend they did have a case. That was a casual contact that tested positive who had been in a significant number of areas in Adelaide. So they have got ongoing cases – not many, which is really, really encouraging – but there are enough there that I think we just need to wait another week. And nearly all states and territories have some form of restriction with South Australia.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, do you have any health advice on when you would be comfortable with borders opening up to international education student [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

It depends on the process. If they are coming into hotel quarantine, I'm very comfortable that the hotel quarantine processes are being managed very well.

REPORTER:

And that would cope?

DR YOUNG:

That would be the issue to work through.

REPORTER:

And on the Santa question?

DR YOUNG:

So, the Santa arrangements have all been sorted. They have very, very good COVID-safe plans. They have rolled them out and that is what's in place. Thank you.

PREMIER:

And Santa has an exemption to come to Queensland [laughter]. Right thanks everyone.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Health Minister Yvette D’Ath and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 7 December 2020

Duration: 5 minutes 30 seconds

E&OE

D’ATH:

Last week we committed to revisiting the issue of the restrictions on people coming from the 20 local government authorities in Adelaide. This afternoon I have been briefed by the Chief Health Officer, as has the Premier, and subject to no unlinked cases over the next five days, we can advise that people will be able to travel from Adelaide into Queensland from 1am on Saturday the 12th of December. This has been able to occur because of the great work that South Australia has been doing and that we have seen no unlinked cases over that period. Of course, Queensland continues to do extremely well. We’ve had 83 days since our last acquired community case, and we’ve had three cases over the last 24 hours, all acquired overseas and all detected in hotel quarantine, bringing Queensland to 15 active cases. Of course, our message in opening up the borders to those people coming from Adelaide – and we welcome them arriving to Queensland and to holiday and to visit family and friends – but the message is clear, we must continue to be vigilant, we must continue to practice good hygiene to make sure that we are staying home if we’re unwell and getting tested if we have any symptoms, and of course, we need to make sure that you are registering when you go into venues, this is absolutely critical. The more our state opens up nationally, the more we need to be vigilant to ensure that we can contact trace if there is a case that is identified in the community. I will hand over to Dr Young just to talk a bit more about Adelaide.

DR YOUNG:

South Australia has not seen any cases in the last week, and they’ve now had a total of 33 cases related to that Parafield cluster. And, it will on Saturday be 28 days since the first case in that cluster. so, we saw that rapid escalation in case numbers initially, and then they very quickly got on top of those cases, quarantined people and managed it. Therefore, if there are no additional cases between now and Saturday morning that are unable to be linked to that outbreak, then Queensland will no longer require quarantine of anyone travelling from those 20 local government authority areas in Adelaide. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We are still working with the various industry groups about how we can safely bring that back in.

REPO

When can we expect a decision on that?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, we will have a decision before Christmas.

REPORTER:

And there have been some reports that the going out for fresh air no longer allowed in Queensland. Is that your decision, or police?

DR YOUNG:

Hotel quarantine arrangements? I have been concerned about enabling those fresh air breaks right from the start and it now has become increasingly difficult to support them, given the large numbers of cases we are seeing come out every single day in hotel quarantine. Yet again today we had three more cases, so the risk just increases and the whole point of hotel quarantine is that people don't mingle, so that is why police have decided that at this stage, they can't support those fresh air breaks, and I support them in that decision.

REPORTER:

Were any of the factors looked at [inaudible] that contributed to the border being reopened to Adelaide, as well as the linked cases [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

The large amount of testing they're doing, and their very rapid response, they really got on top of it very quickly.

REPORTER:

And we did see that case just recently down in New South Wales, is that a concern anymore or has that been satisfied as well?

DR YOUNG:

It was a great concern when it happened, but now they've managed that, they've tested a lot of people and they've not found any other cases. So, again, they've done a really quick rapid response, so it is not a concern today.

REPORTER:

We saw that breach of quarantine, the two Germans heading down to Victoria, are you concerned that something like that could happen here in Queensland if someone were to come from Sydney or another state?

DR YOUNG:

They shouldn't be, they should be managed at the international border, so anyone coming from overseas needs to be managed at that point. So, they are all looking at how it happened and what needs to be done so it doesn't happen again.

REPORTER:

And just to clarify, you could change your mind in the next five days if there are unlinked cases?

DR YOUNG:

Yes of course, if there were any unlinked cases, and again we saw a risk from that cluster, then yes, things could change. But there haven't been any cases in the last seven days and I am very confident that the large amount of testing they've done, and the large numbers of people they've placed into quarantine, so they've had up to 5000 people that they placed into quarantine related to that cluster.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI / DPC

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Health Minister Yvette D’Ath and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 10 December 2020

Duration: 14 minutes 30 seconds

E&OE

MINISTER D’ATH :

I can report three new cases of COVID and one probably historic case. All three positive cases have been acquired overseas and detected in hotel quarantine. This brings our active cases in Queensland to 22. This is the highest active cases we have had since mid-September, but I am very pleased that those cases have predominantly been linked to overseas acquired cases and been in hotel quarantine. We’ve had no community acquired COVID positive cases for 86 days now, and this is fantastic news. We’ve had over 3500 tests in the last 24 hours, and I thank Queenslanders for their ongoing commitment to complying with the directives and making sure they’re going and getting tested if they have any symptoms whatsoever, or concerns that they may have COVID. But this 86 days without any community acquired cases means that today I can announce that as from Monday at 1am, that dancing will be allowed again. This means that we can blame it on the boogie again, but, we have been working with stakeholders and I want to thank the industry for their cooperation in working through the issues with the Chief Health Officer as to how we can do this. Really small dance floors and mosh pits are over under COVID, what we want to see is dancing spread out across a greater area inside venues. So, the rules will continue to be one per two square metres inside venues in their usable space, and we are still asking people to socially distance. Of course, people who are coming from the same household and friendship groups and families are going to dance together – we know that – but we are asking people to spread out and we’re asking venues to help us make sure that we don’t have a tight concentration on small dancefloors. This will help keep us safe. This is a very positive step forward, and one we’ve been able to do because Queenslanders and businesses, the tourism sector, our cafes, restaurants, pubs, clubs have all worked together to ensure that we can have these great outcomes. And so we’re calling on Queenslanders to continue to do that. So we’re not just talking about dancing in our nightclubs, I am so pleased that our seniors will be able to come back into our leagues clubs and our RSLs and do their line dancing during the day. These things are really important, socialising, getting out of your home, that interaction with other people is really important, especially for our elderly and vulnerable people. So this is such a positive step forward. We are announcing this coming into effect on Monday because we work with the industry and they need some days to lead in. We want them to look at their dance space, and not just their traditional dance floor to make sure that they can spread people out, so we want to give the industry just a few days to prepare for that, and so Monday is a sensible start date so they can lead into what will be, I have no doubt, a busy weekend

period next weekend and leading into Christmas. I will hand over to the Chief Health Officer now to make any other comments.

DR YOUNG:

So, three new cases all acquired overseas, all detected in hotel quarantine in the last 24 hours. So we are now up to 22 active cases in Queensland, all of whom have acquired their infections overseas and they've been detected in hotel quarantine. So that is really good, it means our risk, however, in hotel quarantine is escalating. Every single day you would've heard we're seeing more cases occurring in hotel quarantine which means we've had to tighten up our processes. We have seen breaches in hotel quarantine that have led to outbreaks in other states and I am very, very cautious that I do everything possible working with police who have been absolutely brilliant to make sure that that doesn't happen in Queensland. But unfortunately it is a risk which is why we can't totally return to normal in our everyday lives in Queensland. We want to be able to bring people home from overseas, we all want to do that, but we have to accept that means there is an ongoing risk. So that is why people must, and I really emphasise this, if you feel sick with any snuffle or cold or any symptom, it is really important that you immediately go and get yourself tested. That is what we saw work so effectively in South Australia. South Australia is to be commended for their response to their Parafield cluster and getting on top of it so quickly and that is because they found those very first cases. We've got to do the same in Queensland, so it doesn't matter where you live in the state, there are all sorts of things that can happen that mean that you could get exposed, so please, as soon as you get symptoms, get tested. Stay home, most people get that result within 24 hours, wait for that result, hopefully it'll be negative and you can about your lives and feel you've contributed to keeping Queensland safe. So thank you to all of those people who come forward everyday to get tested. I also want to thank all of those people are doing those hard yards in hotel quarantine and keeping our state safe. They are fantastic. I don't underestimate the trials and tribulations of spending 14 days in a room, but it is so important for the health of every Queenslanders. Unfortunately, because of that escalating risk, we've had to remove the ability to provide fresh air breaks, so we are trying to access hotels that have verandas and windows that can open, it is not really always possible in a city such as Brisbane. Nowadays most hotels are air conditioned rather than having windows that can open, but we are doing our absolute best there, so I am very sorry to those people that they won't be able to have fresh air breaks at the moment, but it is really important. Yesterday we had a case of a gentleman in hotel quarantine who tested negative on day four, so then was allowed to have a fresh air break, totally appropriately, all done very, very well, then tested positive day 10. So, we've had to go back and contact trace all of the people he came into contact with. Fortunately, as best as we can tell, there weren't any breaches but it is always a concern, which is why we can't have those fresh air breaks going forward, although I do absolutely understand the impost on those people and I thank them for what they are doing. Thank you.

REPORTER:

Can I ask you a question in regards to how it's going to work [inaudible]? So you can go to a building and dance and dance close with your friendship group and your households. Strangers, is that a guideline that you shouldn't dance with them or will that be enforced?

DR YOUNG:

Look this is about Queenslanders being sensible, and Queenslanders have been really, really sensible to date. That's why we've had the fantastic response in Queensland that we've had. We have not seen transmission. The same with dancing. So dance with other people as you would normally, but don't dance in a whole group – not those moshpits where you've got 100 people all squashed up together that my daughter told me about, all squashed up together and you don't know anyone and you're not dancing with those 100 people. So if you dance with someone you've met that night, that's of course fine. Just be sensible about it and stay with that person, with your friendship group, with your family – stay in those groups but be spread out. So you've got a couple of people there, a couple of people there, a couple there, rather than all everyone in a tiny little space. So just be sensible, that's all I ask and Queenslanders have been really sensible until now.

REPORTER:

No hard and fast rule just do your best?

DR YOUNG:

Yeah, absolutely. As we've done with everything. Hard and fast rules don't work because people find ways of getting around them because you make them hard and first. If you take the concept and work with that people do really well, and that's what's happened. I met with the industry groups yesterday – very, very, very sensible. So I know this will work, it will be put in place and we can manage it. The issue of course is if we were to get any community transmission we would have to stop dancing, but I have no concerns about that. We did that really quickly right at the start, if we need to we can do it really quickly again. But I'm really hopeful that we can keep all of this going until we can start rolling out the vaccine, which is very, very exciting, and we still believe that we will get vaccine in March and will be able to start rolling it out then, and that will really lead us into the next phase of this pandemic that we can remove the remaining restrictions.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, big news – personally very excited about being able to dance again. What's your favourite dance move?

DR YOUNG:

[laughs] Well I also enjoy dancing, but I don't have a conflict of interest. I did not make these decisions because I absolutely love dancing. But yes, I was very aware that people wanted to return to dancing and people definitely can. It's a really good thing in the lead up to Christmas. Personally, I think dancing is fantastic. It means that you're congregating with people, you're socialising, you're doing some physical activity – it's a really good thing to do so I'm so glad we can start doing it again.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Yes.

REPORTER:

On hotel quarantine, can our hotel quarantine in Queensland cope with the current numbers and can we have more people [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

We can definitely cope with the current numbers. When we remove those domestic restrictions, that immediately led to 1183 people being released from quarantine, when we removed the restrictions to Greater Sydney and Victoria, and on Monday when we removed...sorry on Saturday, when we removed the restrictions for Adelaide we know that there'll be another 50 or so people so it's given us more capacity. Whether we want to take in more people from overseas is a decision for the Premier and I'm sure one that she'll be discussing at National Cabinet.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, the Education Minister alluded to a no jobs, no school policy – do you support this in terms of the vaccine?

DR YOUNG:

I think it's something we should discuss. At this stage of course it's too early to have those discussions because the trials haven't involved children, but it's a very, very important discussion as we go forward. Remembering of course that it's a little bit different – I mean, those other diseases that we require children to be vaccinated against, you do need to be vaccinated when you're young for some of them, it doesn't work later, and there's some very significant diseases there that have very high mortality, you know, polio and measles and so forth. Whereas for this, for COVID-19, we know that if you're a healthy, well child you're unlikely to get severe complications. So it's a totally different dynamic but it's a very, very important discussion that we definitely need to have.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, Christmas is also around the corner. With this easing of the dance restrictions, what does it mean – what are the rules for Christmas day and Christmas gatherings? Are we allowed to hug family members now?

DR YOUNG:

People, again, should use their common sense. So if you've got vulnerable people, don't sort of fall at the last hurdle. We're going to get the vaccine, let's keep our most vulnerable people safe until we get the vaccine. Wouldn't it be awful if unknowingly we had a case that had come out into the community and it was your grandmother who got it. So I think everyone should make decisions for themselves and work them through.

REPORTER:

Just a question on an issue raised by the Human Rights Commissioner yesterday about some people in watchhouses with disabilities. Do you think Queensland has struck the right balance between public safety and human rights?

DR YOUNG:

I think we have a very good Human Rights Act and that's been implemented and it's very important to have the Human Rights Commissioner there looking at all the different aspects of life in Queensland. I think that's excellent.

REPORTER:

Do you think more could have been done to, I guess, ensure human rights weren't impeded on in that particular scenario?

DR YOUNG:

I think that's a question best put to the police. I don't fully understand how watchhouses work.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, a small issue with the Pfizer vaccine in the UK this morning. There's been a couple of people who have had [inaudible] allergic reaction, history of allergies – are you concerned about that at all? Do you know of any concern about the Pfizer vaccine more broadly?

DR YOUNG:

No, no. So that issue came out in the trials. They did see people who had a severe allergic reaction history to either other medicines or foods have some reactions. I understand, but only from the media so I expect I'll get more detailed information later, but I understand from the media that they're fully recovered. So we know that happens with vaccines. That's why vaccines have to be given in a supervised environment, and particularly for a new vaccine because we know how to treat those cases. And I understand, again from the media, those two individuals carried adrenalin with them anyway so they were used to dealing with reactions, so very appropriately done from the sound of it. We've got to recognise of course that the risks of a vaccine are there, but the risks of getting an infection, particularly if you're in a vulnerable group, is far, far, far higher.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, are we any closer to a national hotspot definition?

DR YOUNG:

No, that didn't go through. But I'm very comfortable with the definition that I've been using here in Queensland and it's worked for us well.

MINISTER D'ATH:

I was going to say – showing my age – Nutbush is back!



[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier
Steven Miles, Deputy Premier
Yvette D’Ath, Minister for Health
Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer
Katarina Carroll, Police Commissioner
Steve Gollschewski, Police Deputy Commissioner

Date: 18 December 2020

Duration: 25 minutes 29 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

Okay. So there are a couple of issues we want to talk about today. And of course, the first one is the outbreak that we are seeing in New South Wales. So from the outset, can I report in Queensland we have three new cases overnight. Two are in hotel quarantine and the third person is a woman from New South Wales who travelled to Queensland this week, has since tested positive and has returned to New South Wales. And the New South Wales Premier also mentioned this woman in her press conference that has just been held. This woman is connected with the Northern Beaches cluster and you will hear very shortly from the Chief Health Officer that she did visit the Glen Hotel and she did go to the Sunshine Coast, but we are not concerned about where she went on the Sunshine Coast. But we will be doing some testing around Eight Mile Plains, and also she came up in a Virgin flight. So the Chief Health Officer will go through those details. So, at the moment we have 11 active cases in Queensland and we have 3272 tests over the past 24 hours. And once again, it is very, very important that if you have any symptoms, that you do get tested.

Now, in relation to the Northern Beaches, that has been declared a hotspot, and from 1:00am tomorrow people from the Northern Beaches will have to go into mandatory hotel quarantine. I don't make any excuses for that. It is essential that we do that because we want to keep Queenslanders safe. So my message, very clearly, is if people are from the Northern Beaches of New South Wales, it would be well advised for them to stay in the Northern Beaches and not to travel to Queensland. And if that all happens, that is going to be very good. But our State Disaster Coordinator is also here, our Deputy Commissioner, and he will talk about the intercepts that we will be doing for flights coming into Queensland from Sydney, and also to random checks that will be made across the border. This is of concern. When the New South Wales Premier says she is on high alert, we are on high alert as well. And we are coming up to the festive season, and during this period of time people are mixing with their family and friends. They are going away on holidays, they are getting ready for Christmas and a lot of people are not necessarily paying attention to what is happening in the media. So what we do

want Queenslanders to do, we will getting out our messages not just through the media that are here today, but also through social media. It is important that everyone is very conscious about what is happening and taking those extra precautions, so if we all do that, we will come out of this very, very well.

So we will be monitoring of course what happens in New South Wales. They said they now have 28 confirmed cases. It is a rapidly growing situation, which we are all keeping a very close eye on. But at this stage, we will continue to observe that hotspot regime and that has been consistently followed throughout Australia as well. So I just want to give people that sense of security in terms of we are following practices that other states and territories are also at this stage. So I just want to alleviate people's concerns there.

So look, I will hand over to Dr Young to give further updates and then we will deal with the second matter want once we get through this. Okay? So, Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you very much Premier. So, we do have three new cases confirmed overnight; two of them in hotel quarantine, one person recently returned from Iraq, the other from Afghanistan. And we are all used that process now. Then the third case is a lady in her 50s who travelled up from the Northern Beaches on the 16th of December. She flew up on Virgin flight VA925, arriving into Brisbane airport at 9:30am. We are currently contact tracing the rows in front of where she sat, behind, and either side. So that is happening, but anyone who was on that flight should, if they develop any symptoms at all, immediately get themselves tested. As I said, we are contacting those people who are most at risk, but anyone on that flight should come forward and get tested if they have any symptoms at all.

She then got a hire car and travelled to Eight Mile Plains and went to lunch at the Glen Hotel. So anyone who has attended the Glen Hotel after 11:30am on the 16th of December, if they develop any symptoms at all should immediately get themselves tested. Again, we are contact tracing people who did attend lunch, who we are most concerned about, but anyone who went to the Glen Hotel restaurant after 11:30am should monitor themselves and immediately come forward and get tested if they have any symptoms. The lady then travelled to the Sunshine Coast and we are contact tracing there. She went to a hotel but only had contact with the receptionist, so we are working with that receptionist. Otherwise, she did not have any broad contact there.

She then travelled, stayed overnight at the Sunshine Coast then travelled through Brisbane to return home to the Northern Beaches, and she went into the Prince Charles hospital and got tested for COVID because a friend of hers let her know from Sydney that the issue was developing there. So she got herself tested and then travelled onto Sydney and is now back in Sydney. That test result came back positive last night and so we started all of that contact tracing. And I'm confident that we are broadly contact tracing and will find anyone who is potentially at risk of having come into contact with that individual. But the message remains exactly the same as it has always been. Anyone in Queensland today who has any symptoms that could be related to COVID-19, so broadly any symptoms, should immediately come forward to one of our many testing sites across the state and get tested.

Now, because of this rapidly escalating cluster in the Northern Beaches we are now, as we heard, 28 cases and we expect there will continue to be more, I have declared the Northern Beaches area of Sydney hotspot, and as of 1:00am tomorrow morning anyone who has been in that area on the 11th of December or subsequent to that date, will need to go into government hotel quarantine for 14 days when they arrive into Queensland. So that has all been put in place.

Until that is in place, we will be issuing orders to people that they need to go into home quarantine for 14 days from when they left the Northern Beaches. So anyone in Queensland today who has been in the Northern Beaches from 11th of December onwards, any date, needs to immediately go into quarantine wherever they are. So, in their home or in their friends' home or hotel, wherever they are in Queensland, and they need to organise to get themselves tested. That is very important, and they need to stay in that quarantine site, wherever they are, until it is 14 days since they left that Northern Beaches.

Now, police will be working through to see how we can find people but essentially, I am relying on people to do the right thing. And we know from the start of this pandemic that Queenslanders overwhelmingly have done the right thing, so I ask that they continue to do that.

Now, as we go into this period, we know there is more mixing happening and that is what is so great about Christmas, about this holiday season, that friends and family all get together. We just have to continue to be really cautious. We have to be sensible as we go through these next few weeks. This is a rapidly evolving situation in the Northern Beaches and could well expand through other parts of Sydney. So here in Queensland, we have to be ready. So people, please, when you go to those venues that have QR codes or have processes to check contact details, it is critically important that you give them your contact details so that if we have something happen, we can immediately contact people and get on top of clusters as quickly as we can. That is really important.

And I also ask everyone, wherever possible, maintain that 1.5 metre distance. Really maintain that distancing and be alert to yourselves. If you have got any symptoms, come forward and get tested. We have got testing clinics throughout the state and they will of course be operational all through Christmas, the holiday season, New Year. This time is a real risk for Queensland, as we see what goes on in Sydney. Thank you.

MINISTER D'ATH:

Thanks Premier. Look, I will be brief. I think now is a reminder for everybody to be vigilant. We need everyone making sure they are doing that social distancing, proper hygiene, checking in their details at any venues. And I have said before, that responsibility sits with individuals but it also sits with the businesses and organisations who should be making sure that people are registering when they come into their venues.

We need to be very mindful that the positive cases that we are seeing are coming from overseas and we cannot ignore the fact that since last Thursday, we have seen almost a 10 per cent increase in positive cases around the globe – 10 per cent increase. Last Thursday it was 68 million. Today it is 74 million. So what has taken almost a year to get to, now we are seeing 10 per cent in one week, which means in 10 weeks' time, we could see that increase all

over again – what has taken 10 months becoming 10 weeks. So we need to be extremely vigilant and we do ask people, particularly who have been to the Glen Hotel and have been on this Virgin flight on the 16th, to watch for any symptoms and please get tested, and make sure that they are staying home until they get those results.

And of course, the general message in the community – if you are feeling unwell at all and you have any symptoms whatsoever associated with COVID, please go to one of our fever clinics and get tested and wait for those results and quarantine yourself. We want to make sure everyone stays safe this Christmas. We know the decisions we have made and people having to go into hotel quarantine or self-quarantine at home are difficult. But it is not just about this Christmas. We want to make sure that people are here for future Christmases, so please, let's keep everyone safe and follow these directives. Thanks.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thank you, Premier. Well, as I said yesterday morning, the Chief Health Officer and the Health Minister were monitoring very closely the situation in New South Wales, and I think what you can see from the very swift action that was taken overnight that the Queensland Government remains ready to act quickly, depending on the circumstances both here and in other states. I think after this year, Queenslanders can be very confident that our Premier, our Chief Health Officer and our Health Minister will do what needs to be done to keep Queenslanders safe and that our systems, and particularly our health system response, is very, very well-prepared. And I'd just underline further that we are seeing in this outbreak in Sydney just how useful those contact registers at venues are to our contract tracers. And I know it has been tempting to get a bit lax as we get closer to Christmas and we have not had any cases, but it is really important when you are visiting venues now to make sure that you record your details legibly, that you do not just scan the QR code but proceed to provide your details until you get the green tick because that is what will allow us to respond if we have further community transmission here in Queensland.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Thank you Premier. Good morning. If I could just talk about what this hotspot regime looks like and what it will mean for our community as they want to come back into Queensland, in particular. So, for as you have heard from Dr Young, the quarantine is going to be in-home. So anyone that comes into Queensland from the hotspot area today will be required to quarantine for 14 days from the time they left the hotspot. Now, what we're doing in terms of how we practically do that, we are meeting 100 per cent of all flights coming into Queensland, and there are some 52 flights coming out of Sydney today into Queensland, right across the state. There will be 100 per cent meeting of them by Queensland police and our partner agencies. And we'll be interviewing and checking with the passengers on those planes to make sure that we can identify those persons coming out of the hotspot area. And I can again tell you one plane this morning in the north of Queensland had 12 persons on it that we identified. So, those persons are given a self-quarantining notice, which means that their place of residence while they're in Queensland.

As of 0100 hours in the morning we returned to our border declaration pass system, meaning if you are coming out of the hotspot, you must have a border declaration pass to enter

Queensland and you will be required to go into mandatory, self-paid hotel quarantine for 14 days from the time you enter Queensland. With respect to our road borders, they remain open. We will be doing a random checking of the vehicles that come through those areas based on whether we think we need to intercept them, for instance, New South Wales plates, hire cars and the like. There will be messaging for people coming into the state, advising them what they need to do when they get here. We will also be through our compliance checking trying to identify anyone that has come from that area and following up to make sure they're doing the quarantining and, if necessary, take the appropriate action to enforce that.

Can I just finish off by saying, as you heard, this is not the time for complacency. We've seen internationally those jurisdictions where complacency has come in, that they have a re-emerge of the viruses. We will be very strongly looking at our compliance regimes, so licensed premises, cafes, really need to understand that Queensland Government across the board, but also the Queensland Police Service will be out and about and making sure that people are doing the right thing. That's still happening, we're still having to hand out fines periodically, even in the last 24 hours. So, some people are doing the wrong thing. Now is not the time for that. So please, can everyone do the right thing and let's hope we can get through a very happy Christmas. Thank you.

PREMIER:

Any questions?

REPORTER:

Just to clarify, after a woman got tested at the Prince Charles did she stop anywhere else after that?

PREMIER:

I might get Dr Young to address that. She's got all the details.

DR YOUNG:

No. She's been an excellent individual. She then travelled via a hire car, so she did change cars, but she minimised her interaction with people and we are contact tracing anyone she had any interaction with. And then she drove straight down to Sydney. She did stop along the way, but again she managed her interactions very well. So, we've been closely working with the New South Wales Health authorities to ensure that anyone she's potentially come into contact with is contact traced and managed.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, you said that the Northern Beaches area is going to be a hotspot. There's apparently cases now in Cronulla, so the other side of the harbour. What happens there?

DR YOUNG:

At this point in time we'll watch very, very carefully what is happening elsewhere in Sydney. So my understanding at this point is there has been a case in Cronulla, but they're linked to these other cases. There's also been a case in Garden Island, but again it's linked. So while

they're linked and there isn't community spread in those localities, then they won't be declared hotspots. But were there to be community spread, as has occurred in the Northern Beaches, then of course we would look at and consider if we need to make them a hotspot. So it's probably timely to just remind people that they should reconsider any need to travel to Sydney at this time. Just think it through carefully because if things rapidly escalate through the rest of Sydney, other areas might be declared hotspots and people might end up being caught in that process. So as this time, I do suggest to people they think about if the travel is necessary and what the risks to them are.

REPORTER:

Do you have any specific advice for people around the Glen Hotel and the South Brisbane area?

DR YOUNG:

I'm not concerned anywhere else. It is only the Glen Hotel, and even there I have got very few concerns. But the individual did go to that restaurant after 11:30am and at that stage she didn't realise that she was potentially at risk. So, she did practice very good hygiene right from when she left Sydney, she wore a mask on the flight, things like that. But at that stage she didn't realise she was a particular risk. So I think that there is a risk there in the Glen Hotel – it's small, but at this stage I want to make sure that we're contact tracing every single person who possibly could have been exposed to the virus.

REPORTER:

I know it's relatively early days, obviously, but have you been able to trace all those contacts and contact them at this point, or is it...?

DR YOUNG:

We started that last night, so a lot of them, yes, we have. And we'll continue through today. But that's why I've gone out... The two areas that I'm not sure we'll be able to contact everyone as quickly as I would like is that Virgin flight. So, anyone who was on that Virgin flight, because people know if they're on a particular flight, if they're on that flight, they should then come forward and get tested if they have got any symptoms at all. And similarly, anyone who went to the Glen Hotel after 11:30am on the 16th of December. There are the two areas where potentially there might have been some exposure.

REPORTER:

How many people were on that flight? And are you just concerned about just those few rows surrounding...?

DR YOUNG:

I think it's the whole flight. People should be aware that there is a risk if they were on that flight. As I say, very low, but it is there. The specific risk, the two rows in front, behind, and beside, we'll actually contact those people directly.

REPORTER:

Do you know how many people were on the flight?

DR YOUNG:

I don't know how many the total... It was a Virgin flight.

REPORTER:

What do you think the likelihood is of Queensland shutting to Greater Sydney before Christmas?

I really don't know.

REPORTER:

And are you confident that that honour system on the [inaudible] border is going to be enough in case people are driving through? It really sounds they just have to really heed that advice and fill out border declaration passes honestly.

DR YOUNG:

Yes, I'm asking people to be honest. I'm asking anyone who has been in the Northern Beaches area on the 11th of December or subsequent to that to, when they come into Queensland, go into quarantine.

REPORTER:

One for yourself or the Deputy Commissioner perhaps, but how much do these measures rely on honesty? At the airports, for example, is everyone screened, or are you simply asked "Have you been in this area, yes or no?"

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

So, at the airports, as I said, it's 100 per cent meeting of the Sydney flights. So our officers will meet with the passengers coming off that and identify the people that are coming out of the hotspot. So of course it requires them to declare that. If we have any reason to suspect that someone is not doing the right thing, we'll follow up as we would any normal investigation. With respect to the road borders, it's exactly what we did with the Adelaide cluster. That worked quite well for us. Of course, you have got the rest of New South Wales between us and the hotspot, so we're very comfortable we can manage that at the moment. But obviously we'll take the advice of the Chief Health Officer if the situation gets any worse.

PREMIER:

Alright, we might now move on to the second issue. And that is of course the terrorism incident. I've had a very thorough briefing this morning from the Commissioner, and the Deputy Premier was also in attendance there. Tragically, people have lost their lives. My briefing was that this is an isolated occurrence. So there is no need for the Queensland community to be concerned. I have every faith in both Queensland Police and the Australian Federal Police dealing with this issue. But there's going to be a family grieving over the loss of loved ones. But I may hand over to the Commissioner to expand. Thank you Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

Thank you. And you would have seen that Deputy Commissioner Tracy Linford has stood up and done a thorough interview this morning with our counterparts from the Australian Federal Police who are doing this investigation jointly. So, I wanted to make some comments and then just open up for questions if you have, please. We had no choice but to declare this as a terrorism incident. Past behaviour of two years ago, the reasons why this gentleman wanted to leave the

country, the actions towards the police officer and obviously he's the main person of interest in relation to the tragic death of those two elderly people. Our two organisations are working very, very closely together to make sure that we get to the bottom of what has occurred over the last few days and the actual motivations here. Unfortunately, a tragedy has occurred, and our condolences and sympathies go out to the families affected by this.

I will just want to leave it at that, because I know a lot has already been said. I just also want to touch on what the Premier touched on. As far as we know, at this stage, Abdi is the only person who has been involved in this. However, in terms of thorough investigations, anyone who has been associated with him in the past or any other persons of interest that come into play will be closely looked at as well.

REPORTER:

You roughly touched on there, but in terms of setting apart from straight up murder to a terrorist incident, is it that purely because of ISIS support [inaudible]?

COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

There's a lot of criteria that you need to reach. But certainly it's over a period of time that this has come together. Firstly, the ideology some two years ago. Secondly, the reasons for leaving the country in 2019. Thirdly, the actions towards the police. And he is heavily connected to the tragic deaths of the elderly people, and that is another reason alone. So it's incredibly important to declare it as a terrorist act and to make sure that we have the most thorough investigation to see what took place over the last couple of days particularly.

REPORTER:

Another distinction, I suppose, would be the lack of a potential link between him and the victims. In some sense, that makes that a random attack on an elderly couple in their own home?

COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

Yeah definitely. And this is not unlike terrorist attacks across the world – people acting on their own randomly attacking others. So this has been seen across the world, so certainly we are looking at that. Very, very sad. I cannot think of anything more tragic than an elderly couple dying tragically in their own home. Thanks, everyone.

PREMIER:

Right, thanks everyone.



[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPC

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Health Minister Yvette D’Ath and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 19 December 2020

Duration: 24 minutes

E&OE

MINISTER D’ATH:

So today we’re aware that New South Wales has now recorded a total of 42 active cases, and the majority of these cases have already been directly linked to the Northern Beaches. In Queensland I am very pleased to say we’ve had zero cases recorded in the last 24 hours, that leaves us at 10 active cases in Queensland, and we’ve had 3928 tests, so we thank people who are coming out and getting tested. We would like to see more of that and I will go into why shortly. The Queensland Police Service has processed 3640 people over the last 48 hours coming from New South Wales into Queensland to check whether they are arriving from the Northern Beaches, or have been to the Northern Beaches since the 11th of December. Of those people, 174 people have been given directions to get tested and to go into self-quarantine, in addition we have one person who has gone into hotel quarantine and four people who have chosen to return back to New South Wales. In addition, New South Wales has advised us that there are 11 people in Queensland who are close contacts with positive cases from the Northern Beaches. These 11 people have been contacted by Queensland Health, have been asked to be tested and have also gone into self-quarantine. We’ve also got some positive samples coming in our sewage in Queensland: Gold Coast, Townsville, North Cairns and Cleveland, so we are asking Queenslanders, as we have done since the start of this year, to work with us, to trust us, give us your confidence to keep everyone safe by making sure that you are getting tested if you have any symptoms whatsoever. If you are from any of those areas where we are getting positive sewage. So again, North Cairns, Townsville, Cleveland and the Gold Coast, we would like you to come out and get tested, just so we can be assured that there aren’t active cases in our community. I want to acknowledge all of the people who have gone into self-quarantine, or hotel quarantine in the last few days. We know this is a special time to spend with family, we know that everyone who has gone into quarantine over the last two days at our request are going to miss time with family on Christmas Day. We want to thank you for what you’re doing because by you complying with your quarantine, you are helping keep 5 million Queenslanders safe. So we should congratulate all of these people and thank them for what they’re doing because we know it is not easy, but we know that it needs to be done to keep all of us safe. So with the news overnight of New South Wales increased numbers, we can advise that anyone coming from Northern Beaches would need to apply for an exemption to come into Queensland, and if they do get that exemption, they will go into hotel quarantine. So the message is very clear, if you’re from the Northern Beaches, that you are best to stay at home and comply with the directions that have been issued by New South Wales and do not travel to Queensland. Any

Queenslanders returning from the Northern Beaches will have to hotel quarantine, as we've said, if you've been in the Northern Beaches since the 11th of December. Everyone else coming from New South Wales, from 1am tomorrow morning, will need a Border Pass declaration. All people coming from New South Wales from 1am tomorrow will need a Border Pass declaration. You will be able to go online and apply for that declaration from 8pm this evening. For those people who are from the Central Coast of New South Wales, or from Greater Sydney who are coming to Queensland, upon your arrival, we are asking that you get tested and you quarantine yourself until you get the results from those tests. That will help us trace and make sure we contain any possible cases in our community. This is about making sure we keep all Queenslanders safe while people travel around for the Christmas holidays. For Queenslanders who are considering travelling to New South Wales, we seriously ask you to reconsider your plans and do not go to New South Wales currently while these cases are ongoing and there are more cases likely to occur over the coming days. I will now pass over to Dr Young to just say a few words, and then we will take questions.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you Minister. So, no new cases in Queensland overnight, which is excellent, and thank you to all of those Queenslanders who have continued to come forward and get tested, that is the most important thing that all of us can do as we go through this next period. If any of us develop any symptoms, please immediately come forward, get tested at one of our many fever clinics across the state and stay at home, or wherever you're living at that point, until you get a negative result. That is critically important. Now, in terms of people who are travelling up from New South Wales, anyone who has been in the Northern Beaches from the 11th of December onwards, it is really important that when you come into Queensland, that you declare that and as of 1am this morning, you need to go into hotel quarantine where you'll be tested, and you will remain there for 14 days. We have seen continued cases in the Northern Beaches in New South Wales, fortunately at this point in time all of them have been able to be linked back to those venues in the Northern Beaches, although there have been some cases that live outside the Northern Beaches, it is because they went to the Northern Beaches that they've got the infection. So, anyone from the Northern Beaches now needs an exemption to come back into Queensland, unless of course they're a Queensland resident, and if they do come back, they need to go into hotel quarantine. Now, while we watch and carefully take note of what is happening in New South Wales, we are asking that people complete one of those border pass declarations, so anyone travelling from anywhere in New South Wales into Queensland will need to complete a Border Pass declaration as of 1am tomorrow, and they can go online from 8pm tonight to complete that. And we are asking for that so that people then declare that they haven't been in a hotspot, that they don't have any symptoms, they haven't come into contact with a case and that they are prepared to get tested if they have any symptoms. Now, I am asking people, I am not directing at this stage, I am asking, but I think it is very, very important and I am very grateful to the people who are going to follow this advice, I am asking that anyone who has travelled to Greater Sydney or the Central Coast of New South Wales, when they come into Queensland, although they don't need to go into quarantine at this stage, could they please get themselves tested and stay in quarantine wherever they are until they get result. That will give us assurance that we don't have any spread from other areas in Sydney and reduce that risk coming in to Queensland. The reason I am asking for the Central Coast people, is because there is a direct ferry link

between the northern tip of the Northern Beaches and the Central Coast and we know people move between those two areas. So anyone who has been in Greater Sydney, or the Central Coast, I am asking could you please get yourself tested and remain wherever you are until you get that result. That is really important. All of these things, I hope, will be able to keep Queensland safe so we can maintain our current level of openness in Queensland and people can continue to gather and meet. We will, of course, be keeping that very close eye on what is happening in Sydney, Greater Sydney and New South Wales over the coming days. Thank you.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

So we won't be having border controls in the sense we won't have barriers up at the borders, but what we will be doing is putting electronic signs up that let everyone know they should have a Border Pass and the police will be doing random audits and checks as people come across the borders. So, that has already started and the signs will be going up shortly. Victoria is doing the same thing, they've got the signs up on the borders and making sure that people are aware of their obligations to have a pass, and also to be doing random audits on vehicles coming over the borders.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

This is the same process we adopted when we saw positive cases in Adelaide, that we are relying on people to be honest about where they've been, whether they are arriving by road or they are arriving by plane, this has been the case throughout the entire COVID process from the beginning of the year. We are relying on people to be honest about where they've been and where they're going and to provide us with accurate contact details. I think COVID has been going on long enough that everyone understands what happens when you're not honest and you're not accurate, we have seen people who have given false information to police in other jurisdictions and we know the dire consequences that can come from that. This is about keeping people alive, keeping people safe, so we expect that people will be honest about where they've been and make sure that they are quarantining as required.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

MINISTER D'ATH:

As I say, the Queensland Police Service have already processed 3640, I believe – I'll just check my figures, sorry – 3640 have been processed by the Queensland Police Service at the airports, there has been 174 people who have identified coming from the Northern Beaches who have gone into self-quarantine, there was one person who has gone into hotel quarantine and there are 11 other people who are close contacts with positive cases from the Northern

Beaches who are in Queensland who have been contacted, who have been asked to get tested and also gone into self-quarantine.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]?

MINISTER D'ATH:

I am not aware whether they are residents, what we do know is that they are close contacts with people who have tested positive from the Northern Beaches. Dr Young may have some more information on that, I will just pass over to Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

They're people who have been in close contact with a confirmed case in the Northern Beaches, so as part of the contact tracing process in New South Wales, they have let us know that these 11 people are now in Queensland, so we're following them up. So, some of them might have been visitors, some of them might have been Queensland residents returning.

REPORTER:

In regards to, we're not having the border patrols, as you said it is similar to what we've done with Adelaide, when those cases, that cluster came we shut our borders quite quickly to the whole of South Australia [inaudible]?

MINISTER D'ATH:

Well, can I just clarify, we never shut our borders to the whole of South Australia, other jurisdictions did, Queensland did not. What we did was declared hotspots, and this is what we've said for a number of weeks now that we're moving to a hotspot model where we declare hotspots and people coming from those hotspots, or who have been in those hotspots over certain dates must either quarantine or not be allowed in Queensland, or go into hotel quarantine. So what happened in Adelaide was 20 local government authorities were declared as hotspots by the South Australian Government, and as a consequence anyone who had been in those hotspot areas were not able to come to Queensland, or if they got an exemption to come to Queensland had to go to hotel quarantine. So, we're applying exactly the same model here, which is if you're coming from the declared hotspot – in this case it is the Northern Beaches – you either require an exemption, and if you get an exemption you will go into hotel quarantine or you will not be able to come to Queensland. So the same arrangement occurs, we're keeping a very close watch on other areas of New South Wales, particularly Greater Sydney and the coastal area to see what happens there. At this stage, as we've heard, the New South Wales Premier has asked people to just be very vigilant and to not move around too much in the Greater Sydney area, and also to go get tested if there is any symptoms, and we are asking the same thing of Queenslanders.

REPORTER:

How is contact tracing going for the Sydney woman who attended the Glen Hotel [inaudible]?

MINISTER D'ATH:

There are those people who we know are close contacts, and they're being contacted, many of them have been contacted, already tested and we have some results back but we don't have all of those results back. But the results we do have back so far are all negative so I am very pleased with that, but the contact tracing continues because of course, there is the close contacts and then there is the broader community who may have attended on the date we've mentioned – the 16th of December – and there is also people who would've been on that Virgin flight VA925 on the 16th of December that we're asking come forward and get tested as well. So that contact tracing has continued, but many of the close contacts have already been identified, have been contacted and tested and we are waiting those results.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

These are the people that we said could self-quarantine at home. So those who came in from 1am yesterday, we said would be able to self-quarantine, and those were the 52 flights that were coming in to self-quarantine if they had declared that were from the Northern Beaches or had been at the Northern Beaches since the 11th of December, that they were required to get tested and to quarantine and they have been given a mandatory direction to do so.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

Again, this is an honesty policy, as it has been from day one. We also need to remember that we have the same honesty policy on our international borders for everyday travel, even before COVID, which is people fill out a declaration, being asked whether they are carrying any illegal items, or cash or so forth and we rely on people being honest on those declarations, and as we know, border control do random audits to check the validity of those declarations. Exactly the same process here that police will do random audits as far as checking people's declarations, but when it comes to planes, the Queensland Police Service have met every single plane that has come into Queensland since 1am yesterday, coming from Sydney and have spoken to every passenger coming off those flights, and I thank those people who have come forward and have said they're from the Northern Beaches and they're not just in Brisbane, but in Townsville as well, where people have got off those flights yesterday and declared they are from the Northern Beaches and all of those people have been tested and gone into self-quarantine and we thank them for that. I appreciate we have very small numbers today, as I say, one person has gone into hotel quarantine because people are taking the advice of both New South Wales and Queensland not to travel if you have been to the Northern Beaches.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

The fact is that we know that every day matters when it comes to COVID and contact tracing and the spread of COVID. We know that there are positive cases in the northern suburbs, and as Dr Young has said, we also know that some people who live outside of the northern suburbs have tested positive, but having visited the Northern Beaches. So we want to make sure that Queenslanders are not putting themselves at unnecessary risk by going into New South Wales, but also because there is a possibility that New South Wales may put in place further restrictions. And if Queenslanders do not want to find themselves travelling to Greater Sydney and ending up potentially having to quarantine for 14 days, that is why we're saying you should rethink your travel plans, because there is a possibility that that declaration could occur sometime in the future and they may find themselves stuck in Sydney because of those declarations. So, we're saying at the moment, because we do know there is positive cases down there, that we do know there is contact tracing going on, that people should rethink their plans.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

I can advise that Dr Young has been in consultation with the airlines and that consultation includes that international airline crews will be moving into government-managed hotel quarantine, I will let Dr Young comment on that, but we're hoping that will start occurring sometime this week, but this an agreement that has been reached with the airlines, that the international airline crews should go into government hotel quarantine.

DR YOUNG:

So, yes, that is our plan in Queensland, so I have started those discussions. There are two parts to those discussions, the first part is that I want every airline crew member to get tested every seven days for COVID-19, so wherever they are around the world, just to have that rigorous seven day testing process, and most airlines already have something similar. The second part is that starting in the next few days, into the next week, it will be asking all foreign international crew who don't have homes here in Queensland, that they will be quarantining in a government hotel rather than in an aircrew hotel. So we know at the moment there are a number of hotels that traditionally take aircrew, so instead of people being split amongst several hotels, we will probably manage them in one or two hotels. So we hope that to be in place as we continue to work through that over the next few days.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

So across we agreed, because it is vital that we keep those routes open, we are so dependent in Australia for that movement of not only people, but freight from around the world, so it was a major issue for us to go and require all of those airline crews to go into hotel quarantine, but we have been working with the airline industry and they have agreed that this is the time now to introduce it because we are seeing that significant increase in the numbers

of cases around the world and we're starting to see airline crew become positive. So the risk has increased, so that is why we think it is timely to introduce it. And we have been working that through with New South Wales and Victoria as well.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] air ambulance crew [inaudible?]

DR YOUNG:

They are all included, and I met with all of the airline industry, so the small charter flights through to the large airline industry and all of them are caught up by that, but as I said before, if people have got a home that they can go to directly from the airport where they fly in, they can go to their home and quarantine in their home because the airlines have got some very rigorous compliance processes for those people and we also have compliance process. So we think it is easier to manage people who are working in the airline industry, if they've got a home. It is harder when they are in a hotel because we know that they were starting to mingle with other guests in the hotel, sharing the same lifts, so we think it is far better for them to be in dedicated hotels, that is the difference there. So the same thing applies for those aero-medical retrieval flights. If they are based in Queensland and they are able to fly in and then immediately go to their home, they can quarantine in their home, if they can't, they will have to quarantine in a hotel.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

We have considered it and the decision is that they are at risk so they will need to follow the same rules.

[ENDS]

Event: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk; Deputy Premier Steven Miles; Health Minister Yvette D'Ath; Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer and Steve Gollschewski, Deputy Police Commissioner

Airdate: Sunday 20 December 2020

Duration: 35 minutes 34 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

I just want to give you an update. We've had our briefing and I don't think it's going to come as any surprise to the people about some of the decisions that Queensland will be taking to protect Queenslanders and to continue to keep Queenslanders safe.

From the outset can I say we are in a public health emergency and we have been in a public health emergency since 31 January. And we need to continue to do whatever we can to keep Queenslanders safe. So I wanted talk about a couple of issues today.

The first one is that from 1am tomorrow, if you are a New South Wales resident in Greater Sydney, please do not come to Queensland. This is very similar to what the Victorian Premier also announced today. Secondly, if you are a Queensland and you are in Greater Sydney, please return home quickly. We will allow you to come back until 1am Tuesday, but you will be required to have a test and to quarantine at home. Thirdly, and this is a message to all Queenslanders, we need to be on alert. I know a lot of people are out there enjoying holidays and getting into the festive spirit, shopping, and there are a number of things would like to talk to Queenslanders about today.

Firstly, as the Health Minister and Dr Young stressed yesterday, we have concerns about positive samples of sewerage testing in North Cairns, in Townsville, in Cleveland, and the Gold Coast. If you have any symptoms whatsoever, even if they are mild, please go and get tested. That is absolutely important that Queenslanders do that.

Now, we are having some issues with our pubs and clubs and cafes across Queensland. The majority of people are doing the right thing and it's wonderful to see the QR codes and people are logging in. And also going to different surf clubs or whatever, people have the electronic devices when you put your driver's licence in and that's being recorded. We are very concerned when we went to contact trace people at the Glen Hotel, there was illegible handwriting, and we were not able to get hold of everyone who was there during that time. That is not on. It is simply not on. So we are giving a very clear message to our pubs and clubs and cafes right across Queensland that you will have 72 hours to get your house in order. That means you must have QR codes or you must have electronic devices in place otherwise you will be going back to the one per four square metres and people will not be able to stand up and enjoy their drinks. So please get your house in order. As I said, the majority of people are doing the

right thing. People now have had months to get their house in order. And we are in a serious situation, so that means we must be able to contact trace at any step in time. So, please, this is really important because it is going to protect everybody.

Also, everyone is out and about Christmas shopping and we have seen reports today that billions of dollars are being spent in the Queensland economy. That's fantastic news. But we do need people to keep up with your social distancing. We need people to make sure that you are doing your hand sanitising and if people aren't doing the right thing, leave the store. Leave the store and go somewhere else. But we absolutely need people to do the right thing during this point in time.

Now, why are we making these decisions? These decisions are being made to protect Queenslanders and keep Queensland a safe. And what we are seeing in New South Wales is of concern and when the New South Wales Premier says she is on high alert, we are on high alert. So these border measures are necessary. They are necessary because Queenslanders, over the past nine to ten months have done a remarkable job and no-one wants to see happening in Queensland what has happened around the world. And you only have to see what's happening in the northern hemisphere where people in London and New York and other parts of the world will not be travelling much this Christmas because of COVID cases. And of course today we only had two new cases of COVID in Queensland and they were in hotel quarantine. And I'm not going to allow anything to destroy our tremendous effort that every single Queenslanders has worked hard to achieve.

Finally, can I say to anyone that has come from Greater Sydney over the past week, please go and get a COVID test. I think that will be peace of mind to you and your family and peace of mind to every other Queensland as well. So thank you everyone for the great work. I want to thank Dr Young for her advice today. The Deputy Commissioner will also talk about the measures that will be put in place. We have measures at airports. There will be checkpoints that will be put in place across our borders and we are please asking people to do the right thing and if you are from Greater Sydney, now is not the time to travel to Queensland. We love you, we want you to have a peaceful Christmas at home and, hopefully, in the months to come we will be able to welcome you back to our wonderful sunshine state. But now is not the time. We want to contain what is happening in Sydney and New South Wales and we don't want to see outbreaks happening here in Queensland. So I hope Queenslanders understand the strong messaging and the strong action and the strong decisions I have had to take today, but we are doing it based on the health advice and it is not dissimilar to what other leaders are doing also around the country. So I will hand over to Dr Young to say a few words and then the Deputy Premier, the Health Minister, and our Deputy Commissioner.

DR YOUNG:

As of 1am tomorrow morning, Greater Sydney will be a declared a hot spot. Now Greater Sydney includes all of Sydney, and it goes south, down to Wollongong, Wollondilly, the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, and the Central Coast. So that is the area that the New South Wales Premier has put restrictions back into place, so we are taking that same area and it will be a declared hotspot, as of 1am tomorrow.

But, we will allow any Queenslanders to return home, for the following 24-hours so until 1am Tuesday and get tested when they come back to Queensland and go into home quarantine - if they have a home safe and suitable to quarantine in of course, go to quarantine in their home for 14 days from when they left Greater Sydney.

Anyone else will need to apply for an exemption, as usually occurs, so for compassionate reasons, essential work and so forth will need to apply for an exemption, to be able to come into Queensland in they would need to go immediately to hotel quarantine. I would say that very few exemptions will be given, as is usually the case but of course we will look at those.

This is important because we have seen a continued escalation in the numbers of cases in Sydney, and here in Queensland we have removed so many of our restrictions, so we know if we were to get one case there is a real risk it would rapidly spread. Now, we could well get the case and I am very concerned about those four parts of Queensland that have had positive sewage results, so that is Northern Cairns, Townsville, Cleveland and the Gold Coast. We don't test in Brisbane because we will know we will get positives because that is where our quarantine hotels are. But some of those other areas, there are not rapidly explainable reasons why there are positives there, so I am concerned we have people across Queensland who are active COVID-19 cases. So it is really, really important if you have any symptoms, please come forward and get tested immediately and isolate yourself till you get a result.

If you have come from Greater Sydney, so you have been in Greater Sydney, 11th December onwards, could you please make sure you get a test and isolate yourself till you have a result. These things are really important, so we pick up the first case in any cluster. And, anyone who went to the Glen Hotel, on that 16 December could you please come forward because there have been a lot of fantastic people who have come forward, who weren't on any of the lists that the Glen Hotel gave us, and they've come forward because they knew they were there. The lists were incomplete, or some people had written out their names and we couldn't decipher what they had written. It is really, really, really important, I can't overemphasise it enough that when you go into a restaurant, a bar, a club...any place...you must leave your details so we can rapidly contact trace you. It is now the 20th and we still haven't got hold of all the people who were at the Glen Hotel on the 16th, and that is a real risk, because if one of those people was positive, they are out there in our community, potentially spreading the virus, so we have to go back to all of those fantastic things we were all doing earlier on, we've have got to make sure we leave our details, have got to make sure we come forward and get tested if we have any symptoms, we have to maintain that 1.5 metre distance wherever we can, if you can't maintain that distance put a mask on. All of us need to make sure we have a supply of masks, so we can rapidly use them if we need to if we have outbreaks of Queensland.

If we do all of this we can get through this out break again, as we did with all of the previous outbreaks, I know it's tiring, we have done this all before we don't want to do it again but we need to. We have got to keep all of this in place until we are able to roll out the vaccine to every single Queensland who is able to have it. Thank you.

HEALTH MINISTER:

Thank you, so, the message is clear for those people coming from New South Wales to reconsider their travel plans especially from Greater Sydney or the Northern Beaches you are not allowed in Queensland without an exemption and you will have to hotel quarantine. For those Queensland residents you can return in the next 24 hours and self-quarantine at home residence after getting tested, after that you are also required to hotel quarantine.

We also have been advised that there are now 15 close contacts in Queensland who have been in contact with people who have tested positive in New South Wales. So that has gone from 11 to 15 today and New South Wales are assisting Queensland and getting those details, we are contact tracing those individuals, they will get tested and will also have to go to quarantine.

But my message beyond the travel arrangements and people from New South Wales and Queensland is returning to New South Wales it is time we reset our behaviour in our community. We want today, the 20th December to be the reset trigger for Queensland. Let's not wait until we have community transmission again before we act. COVID is as contagious today as it was at the start of 2020. And in fact some countries like the UK and Scotland are reporting that there is a new strain of COVID-19 that is even more contagious. So although Queensland has lifted many restrictions over the last few weeks it is important that we remember that the most important measures must continue to be taken until we have a vaccine. That is, social distancing, hygiene measures and checking into venues. That is why we are asking all Queenslanders, and those visiting Queensland to reset our behaviour. Queensland has done remarkably well and we want to thank everyone for helping us keep us safe. Let's keep it that way, so today, we will initiate a blitz of businesses in Queensland, leading up to Christmas and over the Christmas period. To make sure they are proactively ensuring customers and patrons are checking in. It is not acceptable that businesses are just hoping that their customers and patrons have checked in, it is their responsibility to proactively make sure that before people take their seats at venues, or they take orders, at counters, that they have checked in.

Also, we are noticing that some venues have no longer got markings on the floor for social distancing, or that their patrons are ignoring those markings so let's reinforce our social distancing again. And implementing hygiene measures such as sanitiser being available. We're asking businesses such as supermarkets and especially at this busy time where everybody is out shopping for Christmas to reinstate their measures such as staff greeting customers at entrances to encourage good practice such as wiping down shopping trolleys, and using sanitiser. So businesses, cafe 's restaurants clubs and pubs, supermarkets should have a staff member greeting people as they come in and making sure they have checked in and that they are using the sanitiser. The Premier has already announced that venues have 72 hours to move away from paper-based registrations. Everyone has had sufficient time to set up some electronic means, whether it's the normal registration in clubs or RSLs or using a QR code. But paper registering is not sufficient, it takes too long and people are not giving correct details, or their writing is not legible. We need to move to electronic means of recording people's details so we can trace very quickly.

Stop handshaking, cough or sneeze into your arm, wash your hands and sanitise regularly including wiping down services like shopping trolleys and shopping baskets. A good test, if you are a business is are you using less sanitiser now than you were a few months ago? Because you have got more customers and more patrons than ever before. So you should be using more sanitiser. So businesses should be looking at whether their customers and staff are actually using sanitiser and making sure that they increase those practices again.

In addition our compliance teams will be out in force not just monitoring businesses but for those people who are self-quarantining at home. Again, we thank you for having to stay home and separate yourself from other people in the household, as well as making sure you do not allow visitors into your home, while you are self-quarantining for those 14 days under formal mandatory direction, we thank you for that but our compliance teams also continue to do what they have been doing since early this year, which is they will be texting, they will be phoning and there will be random checks that people are at home and complying.

So let's all do our part and let's make sure that Christmas 2020 is a safe and happy one for everyone.

DEPUTY PREMIER:

Thanks Premier. Obviously the escalating situation in Sydney is very concerning, the increased number of cases as well as the geographic spread. Our objective, our sole objective is to avoid another wave of COVID-19 here in Queensland. To avoid another round of the kinds of the harsh restrictions and lockdowns that we experienced earlier in the year, that Melbourne has only just made their way through, and that Sydney is heading into now. And if we are to avoid that we need to do two things. First of all we need to greatly reduce the number of people who have been potentially exposed to the virus in the Greater Sydney area from coming to Queensland and that's why this hard border closure is so important - it will greatly reduce the number of people who have potentially been exposed who will be in our state and those who are in our state will be in home isolation or quarantine. So that's incredibly important but it doesn't completely eliminate the risk and that's why our social distancing and the other measures that the Health Minister has outlined are so important, so that if somebody has been exposed to the virus does get to Queensland, that we can isolate them if possible, if not, have accurate contact details to assist our contact tracers to identify anyone who has been exposed, and with those two measures we hope to ensure that we don't get an outbreak here in Queensland. These decisions aren't taken lightly, we know that just before Christmas they will greatly impact on many people's plans, but this has been a year in which Queenslanders have many sacrifices to keep themselves and their communities safe, and this is one more necessary sacrifice to avoid an outbreak here in Queensland.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

So just to give you some idea of what is happening at the moment, in the 44 hours from 4pm on Friday we have met 87 flights from Sydney, checked 10,760 passengers and placed 108 persons into quarantine in Queensland.

As you've heard, as of one o'clock tomorrow morning, we will move to a hotspot regime for the whole of Sydney. As it stands now anyone that's entering Queensland from New South Wales and this includes people coming across the road borders must have possession of a

border declaration pass, irrespective of where they reside. So if they're coming into Queensland from New South Wales they're required to have that pass.

How it will pan out that coming out of the hotspot area, they will have a queue pass, which is a quarantine pass and our officers at the airport and road borders will determine whether the person is eligible to go into home quarantine as explained by the Chief Health Officer or whether they will have to go to mandatory self-paid hotel quarantine both for 14 days, as explained by Doctor Young.

What you will see also is in the next 24 to 48 hours, increasing check points on the road borders, we will implement them immediately as best we can, we had planned for this. I anticipate they will be up relatively quickly so anybody in Sydney thinking they can drive through to Queensland and slip through they will probably find a checkpoint by the time they get here. So what we're are looking for is for people to really be compliant with the regime and make sure they do that. Unfortunately we've seen in the past two days two people that have been placed in hotel quarantine have breached that - sorry home quarantine - so just to clarify, people placed in home quarantine one person out on the Northern Beaches and one person who was a member of an international flight crew have not abided by their home quarantine order. We will check. So they were found to have breached those orders by compliance checks by police. So we are checking, so anyone who does go to home quarantine can expect to get visited during the 14 days. So please abide by that. As always with our road check points we understand that this will cause delays, we understand that this causes stress for people, the messaging is very clear, please understand what is required of you, we will try to make it as streamlined as we possibly can, we will give as much messaging as we possibly can but we need people to plan ahead and not travel unless it is absolutely necessary. Thanks Premier.

PREMIER:

Happy to take some questions.

REPORTER:

Premier can I understand does that mean you are putting in place a hard border again...

PREMIER:

There are going to be checkpoints and then we will be looking very closely at what is happening in Victoria and was happening in New South Wales over the next 24 to 48 hours as well, so if people are thinking about coming from Greater Sydney to Queensland can I urge you not to come because police are going to be there in force checking.

REPORTER:

I guess what I mean what are the checkpoints will we see? [inaudible]

PREMIER:

We will have checkpoints at this stage. Like I said, we will be watching...I hope you are not doing that, Dan.

[laughter]

Alright, so there will be checkpoints at the moment so the police will be there randomly intercepting with the view of putting in place harder border closure measures, depending on what happens in the next 24-48 hours in Sydney.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] How do you know how many people [inaudible] how are you satisfied that you've traced everyone...

PREMIER:

Well we don't...and that's the whole point why we have made that strict direction today that there will be, over the next 72 hours, the opportunity for cafes, clubs, and pubs to get everything in order. So what we have said very clearly is that and if anyone was at the Glen Hotel on that date that the Chief Health Officer has said, please go and get tested, and a lot of people are coming forward and getting tested. So it just goes to show that people need to make sure they have these measures in place. It's very simple to fill in the QR code. It's very simple to put your driver's licence in a machine and it's all recorded. It's not acceptable for patrons to come in and not leave their details. So everyone has got to play their part here folks. Please do the right thing. You are helping not just yourselves, but you are helping the whole community.

REPORTER:

Will that business be facing fines?

PREMIER:

As the Health Minister said there will be a blitz happening as well, so yes they can face fines.

REPORTER:

So that specific business you've identified that they didn't accurate record everyone...

PREMIER:

Well that is a matter now for the Health Department to look at that.

REPORTER:

For the returning Queenslanders, when does the 14 day quarantine kick in? Say someone flew back this morning. Do they have to quarantine?

PREMIER:

I might get the Chief Health Officer to address that. Thanks. Thanks Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you Premier. So anyone from the Northern Beaches, because the Northern Beaches has already been declared a hot spot needs to go into hotel quarantine and stay there for 14 days. As of 1am tomorrow, Greater Sydney will be declared a hotspot but we are allowing Queenslanders to have 24 hours in which they can come back and they will go into home quarantine if their home is suitable, go into home quarantine and stay there for 14 days from

when they were last in Greater Sydney. After that, everyone, whether you are a Queenslander or not goes into hotel quarantine for 14 days. And if you are not a Queenslander or someone permanently relocating to Queensland, then you need to actually apply for an exemption for one of those reasons. So a compassionate reason or essential workers, etc. You won't be allowed if you are simply coming for a holiday.

REPORTER:

What rules are currently in place for airline crew flying to Queensland from overseas?

DR YOUNG:

So at the moment, airline crew can quarantine in crew hotels, there are around six of them in Brisbane, and a number elsewhere in the state. Or if they have got a home because they are based in Queensland and then fly overseas, they can quarantine in their home. As of Tuesday morning, all international airline crew who don't have a base in Queensland, a home that they usually use, will have to go into one of the government run, police managed hotels in Brisbane.

REPORTER:

The crew member who breached quarantine, were they quarantining at home? [inaudible] Is it still appropriate to have them...do people have that option if people can breach it?

DR YOUNG:

So I am writing to that airline to show cause why the staff in that airline shouldn't have to go into hotel quarantine.

REPORTER:

What about more generally do you think it's time to re-visit that one?

DR YOUNG:

No I don't think it is because in most cases the airlines are actually tougher on their staff than I would be. So they ensure compliance, they ensure that's all managed.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

I would prefer not to say. I would prefer to write to them first and ask them to show cause why this person did what they did.

REPORTER:

Was it an Australian airline?

DR YOUNG:

No.

REPORTER:

In terms of the quarantine I think it was yesterday there was a restriction placed for people coming from Greater Sydney to the Central Coast to undertake a test, and then once it's clear to go out. Why is it different to 14 days as opposed to waiting for that first test?

DR YOUNG:

Right...

REPORTER:

So why are people coming from overseas and having to wait 14 days but only have to wait for the results from the first test?

DR YOUNG:

Right so yesterday the risk profile was different. So we've now seen in New South Wales increased numbers of cases and they have started to see seeding of cases outside the Northern Beaches and clusters develop. So the risk profile has significantly increased so that's why Greater Sydney would be declared a hot spot from 1am tomorrow morning.

REPORTER:

Dr Young what's the suitable home quarantine [inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

No, no...it's more about who else in that household. For instance we wouldn't want someone going into a household where there were elderly, vulnerable people. So it's about talking to the person, are there other risk factors in that household? For some people they choose to go into hotel quarantine because they feel that their home isn't suitable. And we have done that many, many times over the last 10 months. When nurses went down to Victoria, for instance, to assist down there with their response, a number of them asked to go into hotel quarantine when they returned because they didn't feel it was safe to go into their own home to quarantine.

REPORTER:

Just another question if you're coming from regional New South Wales is it just the border declaration pass at the moment?

DR YOUNG:

Yes that's correct.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] Have they all been contact did now, do they know they were close contacts?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, and they are all being tested but they don't have the results back yet.

REPORTER:

And do you anticipate that more people who have been close contacts with New South Wales cases could be in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

That is possible and that is why a very, very worried about those sewerage results. So if I could repeat those results again, they are in North Cairns, Townsville, Cleveland, and the Gold Coast. Which, when we think about it, are actually tourist areas in the state. So I am concerned that there are people from Sydney or the Northern Beaches who have gone up to those areas in the north or down to the Gold Coast and I need them to come forward and get tested.

REPORTER:

Would you consider some sort of mandatory testing in those places to randomly test people in the population who may be asymptomatic?

DR YOUNG:

No, we have not found that useful. So I need people who have been in Greater Sydney to come forward and get tested. But I don't think it's useful to just randomly go through the population and test people who are asymptomatic. It's really about people with symptoms or people who have been in an area where there is increased risk of transmission.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

DR YOUNG:

Monday...

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

Monday sorry...the border declaration passes [inaudible] Is there any way that process can be sped up?

DR YOUNG:

It has been. The vast majority of people are getting their responses within half-an-hour.

REPORTER:

Dr Young given your concerns about the potential for COVID [inaudible] what about dancing in pubs and clubs? I know we just lifted them last week or the week before, but have seen plenty of social media last night of people dancing pretty close to each other, is that a concern to you?

DR YOUNG:

Yes it is a concern. So if we were to get community transmission within Queensland then we would have to review those restrictions – no different to what New South Wales is currently doing. So their Premier has come out and has gone back in terms of all of their restrictions to the one per four square metre no dancing etc and has put that in place for Greater Sydney. We would have to do something similar if we get community transmission but my hope of course is that by doing all of the things we've just discussed we won't get community transmission in Queensland.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] is that police quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

Between police and Justice and Attorney General's Department and also our Environmental Health Officers from Queensland Health.

REPORTER:

[inaudible] what is that blitz going to look like, what are the potential penalties [inaudible]

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

The penalties remain the same as we've had all through it so the Chief Health Officer's directions carry with them a penalty should someone breach them for instance border breaches, false declarations are \$4000 or thereabouts. The other breaches are \$1334 for anyone that disobeys and of course the corporate ones, it escapes me at the moment but it is significantly more so it's quite a heavy penalty for that and we've seen right through the response the response that we've had to issue somewhere around 2700 fines already and it's consistently still happening. People are still doing the wrong thing, not listening to the advice we are given, not following the directions, so as you've heard from the Health Minister we're going to really ramp that up and that will be done collaboratively, there's a standing taskforce that looks after that across government, coordinated out of Justice and Attorney General's Department but police would have a very strong role in that and as you've heard in particular for us those persons that have got home quarantine orders we'll be very closely monitoring whether they're abiding by those.

REPORTER:

Do you think New South Wales' Premier has [inaudible]

PREMIER:

That's a matter for New South Wales, but can I say a couple of things about that. Look, first and foremost, we've come a long way in Queensland and I don't want to see all of Queensland's hard work go backwards, that's why we're taking these tough measures. Secondly, if we start to see more cases come out of New South Wales in the next couple of days I think we should have a National Cabinet meeting. I really think it's going to be at that critical situation that we need to convene as a National Cabinet to talk about these issues because it is of national significance.

REPORTER:

When was the last National Cabinet?

PREMIER:

A couple of weeks ago.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

PREMIER:

Well I think what can be achieved, that the Premiers and the Territory Ministers can all be across all of the issues...we're getting great briefings from the Chief Health Officers but I don't think we want to see what happened in Victoria happen in New South Wales and I definitely don't want to see that happen in Queensland. So, I'm just saying if things escalate over the next couple of days I think a National Cabinet would be worthwhile but also too now is the time, I know a lot of people are on holidays, everyone really needs to listen and to take the advice. We've got a lot of visitors to our state at the moment who are enjoying our Queensland lifestyle – we want that to continue. And the only way that can continue is if everyone is doing the right thing so please leave your name, your contact details at different venues across Queensland as the Health Minister said keep up your social distancing and we have to take these really strict measures to continue to keep Queensland's lifestyle the way it is. Okay, thanks everyone.

[ENDS]

Released under the DPC

Engagement: Press Conference

Speaker/s: Annastacia Palaszczuk, Premier
Yvette D’Ath, Minister for Health
Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer
Steve Gollschewski, Police Deputy Commissioner

Date: 21 December 2020

Duration: 28 minutes 39 seconds

E&OE

PREMIER:

Hello everyone. Hello Queensland. And I just want to give an update. Of course, we have only had one new case in hotel quarantine overnight, which is fantastic news. And we have 10 active cases. And people are getting tested, which is great to see. So, over 4000 people have been tested in the past 24 hours. So we want to keep that great record in Queensland and if you have any symptoms please go and get tested.

Well, we just wanted to update everyone today in relation to the border closures, and I will hand over to the Deputy Commissioner to talk about more in detail about that. But what we are seeing is people are breaching and are being turned around, so there will be a hard border closure that will be going in place. People will start to see barricades going up again this afternoon, and by 6:00am tomorrow it will be back to the strong border measures that we have seen in Queensland that have kept Queenslanders safe. This is really important everyone, we want people to do the right thing, so people will be turned around. But I do want to thank the police, the Police Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner briefed me just previously, and that is why we have taken this swift action today, because unfortunately people are doing the wrong thing and we cannot risk it.

The other message I wanted to give today too was just in relation to if anyone has travelled to Queensland from the Northern Beaches from the 11th of December, I am asking you to please go and get a COVID test. We are concerned that there are people from the Northern Beaches who have travelled right around Australia, we believe that there are people here in Queensland. So what I'm saying to all accommodation providers is you will have a list or a register about who was staying your premises. If they have come from the Northern Beaches, please put something under their door or talk to them about going and getting a COVID test. Likewise, if you have friends or family who have come to Queensland, we are asking them to also remind them to go and get a COVID test as well. We want to do everything we possibly can to make sure that we do not get any community transmission here in Queensland.

And I want to thank everyone for doing the right thing, I know this is a difficult time, and of course being closed to Greater Sydney and the Northern Beaches, we do want to welcome

those tourists back here to Queensland down the track. We do love you, but at the moment as you can appreciate it is a very hard and very difficult decision that we are making, but we are making these decisions in the best interest of keeping Queenslanders safe. We also have a lot of visitors here at the moment as well and we want everyone to be safe. So the Health Minister will talk a little bit more about the QR codes and the compliance there, but I want to hand over quickly to Dr Young. She has got to go to an AHPPC meeting, so we will get her to do her briefing and any questions to Dr Young, and then the Deputy Commissioner will update everyone about the hard border closure that will be going into effect. Thank you Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

So we have that one new case in Queensland, someone in hotel quarantine. Now we have had one case associated with this growing cluster in the Northern Beaches, who was here on the 16th and 17th of December, and please, anyone who is in the Glen Hotel on the 16th of December, could you please come forward and get tested. 560 people have so far, but we're not sure that everyone has come forward. That is critical. It is critical for you as an individual but it is also for your family members and for the community. That is very important.

Similarly, anyone who is in Queensland today who was in the Northern Beaches on the 11th of December or subsequent to that, it is really important that you also come forward and immediately make yourself known and get tested. That is critical, and I do thank all of those people who have come forward. We are seeing very long queues at some of our testing facilities. If that happens, just go online and see where there are other facilities, because we have stood up a lot throughout the state. It is really important that anyone in Queensland with any symptoms immediately comes forward and gets tested. Do not think it is a sniffle or a cold, it could easily be COVID. That is unfortunate but true. We have to go back to all of those processes we had in place earlier in the pandemic that stood Queensland so well. We have got through this before, I am positive we will get through it again because people know what to do. Now is the time to go and put all of that back in place. And please, whenever you go anywhere and they need you to give your details could you please make sure you give them. So we are introducing that mandatory QR code, or electronic process, but it is just so important, please give accurate details. It is so easy to get one number wrong in a mobile phone number. Just make sure it is correct because that means we can very, very quickly get hold of everyone who has been in that facility. We will not be still trying to get people five days later as we are with the Glen Hotel. So make sure you give your information when you are out and about so we can immediately get hold of you. Now, happy to take any questions.

REPORTER:

Dr Young, over the weekend you mentioned those positive sewerage test results. We have got 4000 people tested overnight, I am sure you would like to see more people tested to be sure that there isn't undetected active COVID. What kind of testing levels are you hoping for, and what sort of timeframe do you think before we see positive tests, if there is undetected COVID in those locations?

DR YOUNG:

There are a lot of questions and a lot of hypotheticals there. Right, sewerage testing just gives us an idea. It does not give us absolutes. So it says that there is virus detected in that sewerage area. We don't know whether that is fresh virus, a new case, or a case that's still developing, or whether it is an old case that is still shedding. My concern is that we haven't seen four areas simultaneously test positive like that before and we do know that there are people who have previously been in the northern beaches that are in those areas. That is why they are concerning. But we can't link the two exactly. It just alerts us that those areas were negative and now they are positive, so something has happened. So really, it is about anyone in those areas coming forward if they have got any symptoms or anyone who has been in the Northern Beaches 11th of December onwards comes forward and gets tested. So there is not a direct link, but it is saying there is potentially a problem.

REPORTER:

You mentioned those testing lines today, we have seen them pretty much around the south-east. Previously we have ramped up our ability to pop-up clinics and those drive-through clinics. Is that happening?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. Yes, that is all happening now. The opening hours have been extended, they are getting more staff in, they are ramping up other clinics. All of that is happening.

REPORTER:

What conditions would need to be met to reopen to Sydney?

DR YOUNG:

We would have to have those 28 days of no unlinked cases. The good news at this point in time is all the cases that New South Wales has announced, so they announced up to 83 this morning, have been linked back to that first event that happened in those two areas, those two values on the 11th of December. So at the moment they are all linked back.

REPORTER:

Can I clarify just one thing? So anyone who has been to the Northern Beaches who was already in Queensland since Friday the 11th, they are being urged to go and get a test and self-isolate for two weeks?

DR YOUNG:

It depends on the date they came in. Anyone who is having a test needs to isolate until they get the result. Now, some of those people might already be in quarantine because of the dates they travelled into Queensland. They then have to stay for the 14 days.

REPORTER:

And then anybody who is travelling back to Queensland since 1:00am last night and 1:00am tonight who have been in the Greater Sydney region, they also need to get a test and self-isolate for 14 days since being in that area?

DR YOUNG:

They are Queenslanders who came into Queensland from 1:00am this morning. They have until 1:00am tomorrow morning to be able to do their quarantine at home if their home is suitable, of course. After that, it doesn't matter whether you are a Queenslander or non-Queenslander, you will have to go into hotel quarantine. Having said that, if you are not a Queenslander, you will need an exemption to come into the state.

REPORTER:

So, we have had questions from people who returned prior to 1:00am last night who have also been in Greater Sydney. Their advice that they were given was to go and get a test, but then they only need to self-isolate until the test is given negative.

DR YOUNG:

Yes. That is correct. Yes.

REPORTER:

So 1:00am was the cut-off for a two-week quarantine?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. That is correct. Well, two weeks from when they left Greater Sydney. So, if they went from Greater Sydney to the northern coast of New South Wales for a week for a holiday and then came up, they only have to go into home quarantine for a week. They are being given orders, so they were told that they needed to go and get an order and that would tell them how long.

REPORTER:

But if someone returned from Greater Sydney, say, yesterday, they only need to get a test and isolate until the test is negative?

DR YOUNG:

Correct.

REPORTER:

Yesterday, I think, there were 15 close contacts in Queensland with the New South Wales cases. Has that number updated?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So there have been 27 close contacts that New South Wales have let us know about. One of them was that individual, of course, that we found here and has gone home. So that leaves 26 who are still in the state. All 26 are in quarantine. Some of them are in hotel quarantine, some of them are in home quarantine, and 20 of them so far have been tested with a negative result.

REPORTER:

Will the new requirement for that digital check-in platform for businesses be [inaudible] a new health order?

DR YOUNG:

Yes, it well.

REPORTER:

And so that will be from?

DR YOUNG:

Wednesday.

PREMIER:

So, the Health Minister will talk about that in a moment. We might let Dr Young go to AHPPC, if that is okay? I'll hand over to the Deputy Commissioner. Thank you Dr Young.

DR YOUNG:

Thank you Premier.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

Thanks Premier. So, if could just start with giving you some idea of the magnitude of the task we have at hand since Friday when we brought back the border declaration passes. We have had 237,500 of those applied for, which gives you an indication of how many people want to come into the state of New South Wales. And since Friday we have put over 500 people into quarantine. Just today we have seen six flights come out of Sydney into Brisbane until just before lunchtime, and 166 of those persons had to be placed into quarantine. So we are seeing fairly significant numbers of people still coming into the state. The domestic airports are doing well because we are doing a 100 per cent meeting of all of the flights coming out of Sydney, so we are processing that quite well. Where we have concerns is at our road borders. And I am briefed that even today with not hard closures, but with checkpoints, that we are seeing delays of up to 75 minutes and the traffic is very heavy.

Also, during the period we have been doing random intercepts, we have turned around 81 persons and placed 112 into quarantine, and that was up to about 10:30 this morning. What is concerning about that is that a number of those persons who were intercepted were either displaying the incorrect pass or no pass at all, and were making it very clear that they were trying to get into Queensland to meet with family for Christmas purposes. We can't give the community confidence that we are picking everyone up as it is coming across the border, hence the need to move to a harder border closure.

So what people can expect to see, commencing immediately, as a re-instigation of our the hard border closures across all of our road entry points with New South Wales, and progressively they will be implemented and fully functional by 6:00am tomorrow. Please, everyone that wants to come into Queensland, please have the correct border declaration pass and please identify whether you are coming out of a hotspot area. There are significant penalties that go with this. It is a \$4003 fine for falsely declaring and it will be mandatory quarantine or turned around. So we need people to co-operate with us here. We are trying to stop the spread of virus again into our state and it is disappointing that we see in the instance where we have tried to do a system where it relies on the integrity and honesty of the

community coming in and some people are not doing the right thing. So therefore, we have to go back to that more hard... harder closure. I have high confidence in our people. They're well practiced at it. We know how to do this. We will do it as effectively as it can. We will always work with compassion using communication to make sure that we do get our compliance with the people, but I just have to remind everyone that there are severe penalties if they don't do the right thing.

REPORTER:

The 81 people who were turned around, what period of time is that in?

DEPUTY COMMISISONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

That's from 1:00am this morning.

REPORTER:

Oh okay. And do you think that they were deliberately trying to...

DEPUTY COMMISISONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

I have no doubt a number of those people were deliberately trying to get into the state without having... they did not have passes some of these people. Or they had the incorrect pass knowing that they should have had a hot spot pass rather than a G pass.

REPORTER:

And have you fined them or have they been just turned around?

DEPUTY COMMISISONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

At this stage because we're doing random intercepts we're doing turnarounds but we will take a much harder posture if people continue to do the right thing... the wrong thing, I should say.

REPORTER:

Will police be monitoring those people who have gone into home quarantine?

DEPUTY COMMISISONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

Yeah, and I mentioned that yesterday. Since then we've had another couple of breaches of that. So we're now up to four people that have failed to abide by their home quarantine orders. What that means for them is a \$1300 fine... \$1330 fine to be precise and also, they are then placed in government hotel quarantine.

REPORTER:

So these people who've gone to check if they're at this house or the home they're meant to be staying and they're not there?

DEPUTY COMMISISONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

That's 100 per cent right. Or they done things like gone for a walk on a beach when they can't do that kind of thing. They need to understand – people that are in home quarantine

need to understand we will check them. They will be checked. Not only will they have phone calls from our compliance teams online, they will get physically checked by police officers and we will take action if they're not doing the right thing. Thank you.

MINISTER D'ATH:

Thank you Premier. And as far as checking those individuals, when they make statements that they've been to a medical centre or somewhere else the police are able to investigate to see the accuracy of those statements. So we warn people, giving false statements to police could end up being a very costly exercise for them because they are able to be followed up and investigated and checked whether they have actually been at those places. So as the Chief Health Officer has said we've had 27 people now that New South Wales has identified as close contacts of positive cases in New South Wales, particularly Northern Beaches. We're very pleased that all of those people other than the one who's already returned back to New South Wales are all in quarantine and so far, the results of 20 of them have come back negative. Of course, they still will need to be in quarantine for the 14 days and they will be tested later in the 14 day period as well to check that they're still negative. As far as the compliance, we will be ensuring from 1:00am Wednesday morning that venues move to electronic records. Now, when we say electronic records what we're talking about is whether it's a QR code or some other electronic means to ensure that if Queensland Health needs to walk into a business and get immediate access to the data of who has been there on any given day that they're able to do that. So how that business collects that data electronically so that we're able to download it, we're working with businesses and stakeholders as to how they manage that. We know clubs and RSL's have their own check in system with members, often using driver's licences, so we want to be flexible but what we are absolutely intending on doing is moving away from a paper based system, where Queensland Health are provided with paper sheets with illegible writing and names. And can I say for those people who think it's funny to actually give false names and false details – if we need to put in place penalties for those people who are deliberately giving false information in their electronic records then we will do so. Because this is not a joke. We are trying to save lives here. So we want to make sure that people are giving accurate information – their name, their email, their phone number when they're putting their information into either a QR code or other measures. We're also looking at how to make that electronic means easier. I'm working with business to do that. So a directive will be issued shortly by the Chief Health Officer that clearly indicates when scanning needs to occur and how. But the scanning is just one part and as I said yesterday – I remind businesses and I remind people in Queensland, so patrons, customers – it is all our responsibility to do the right thing. So when you walk into a venue do not sit down until you know you have scanned in. As a business please be checking with your customers, your patrons making sure they've scanned in. Don't leave it to chance because it is so important that we've got everyone's data. I want to thank everyone who's coming out to be tested today. We are seeing lines on the Gold Coast, Noosa and Brisbane of people lining up for testing. We know that they're waiting for some time. We have surge capacity and we're working across our Hospital and Health Services to make sure they can work through those numbers. But there will be lines and we are so grateful that people are coming and getting tested. We want to keep doing that. So whether you've been from Greater Sydney, whether you've been from the Northern Beaches or you have symptoms that align with COVID we want you to get tested wherever you are in Queensland because that's how we

can make sure that everyone stays safe. So please get tested and wait at home until you get those results and obviously, if you're positive Queensland Health will contact you to manage those cases. But so far, we do not have any locally acquired cases in Queensland right now and that's the way we want to keep it, but we can only do that if everyone plays their part. For those from New South Wales, from Greater Sydney and Northern Beaches who were hoping to holiday up here – we do want you to come when the time is right and when we can open back up to Greater New South Wales but at the moment we need you to follow the advice of the New South Wales Government, and also Queensland and please not come and make sure that you're getting those proper border passes and you're not trying to come here from a hot spot. The last thing is, please make sure if you're seeking to travel or you're returning as a Queensland resident, please keep checking the New South Wales and the Queensland COVID sites to see if the hot spots change. We know there's other areas being looked at and there is a possibility... there's 32 local government areas currently on the New South Wales and Queensland site declared as hot spots so please make sure you're checking to see if there's any increases in those local government areas. So you will know whether you're eligible or not to come into Queensland. Any questions?

REPORTER:

Can I ask Minister – with the 28 days that the Chief Health Officer said is the benchmark again, what's the date [inaudible]?

MINISTER D'ATH:

We can advise that we will not be reopening back to the Northern Beaches or Greater Sydney before the 8th of January. On the 8th of January we will review but the 8th of January is 28 days from an unlinked case being back to 11th December. So for the tourist operators and those who are relying on people coming from those area we do want to give you some certainty in saying do not expect any change before the 8th of January and we will reevaluate at that time based on what is happening in New South Wales.

REPORTER:

Just on QR codes and businesses doing the right thing – should they maybe introduce scanning or looking at ID's like nightclubs do? So that people can't give false names?

MINISTER D'ATH:

Look, we need to be practical about how we do this. We want people to be scanning in. We want businesses to participate in this process. We don't want to make it too cumbersome that they can't do it. We know that that sort of equipment requires new equipment being put into venues. It comes at a cost so the QR code is a very simple process. You can... obviously, the code is displayed in a venue, in a café, restaurant. People simply open up their camera and hit the link and put their details in so it's a really simple process that doesn't require additional cost or significant cost for the business. So we think that's the simplest process. I've Googled it – if you Google “free QR code” you will find, as a business, that there are a number of platforms that allow you to set it up for free and it shows you how to do it so we think that's the simplest process so far.

REPORTER:

So how will you be enforcing compliance with this?

MINISTER D'ATH:

So we have 20 compliance teams out right now looking at just general compliance with COVID safe plans and directives. So aside from the QR code or other electronic scanning we want to make sure that businesses are complying with their COVID safe plans and the directives that have been issued by the Chief Health Officer. So those compliance teams are out across Queensland today and will continue over the school holiday period to make sure there's compliance. That's in addition to the normal compliance by the Queensland Police Service and also the Office of Liquor and Gaming where they go out and do general compliance as well. So they will be checking normal COVID safe plans and compliance but when we shift over to electronic they will also be checking on that. We're not looking at a big stick approach here. We want to work with business. We want to work with stakeholders. It's education. It's warning. But our tolerance will only last for so long because we do need to make sure that we have accurate records and if we need to, we will start fining businesses.

REPORTER:

Are there any plans for the Government to introduce it's own check in system like other states are doing?

MINISTER D'ATH:

So we are looking at that right now. Anything we can do to help small business and make it easier to have the scanning measures in place we are looking at right now to support them.

REPORTER:

So what agencies will be responsible for [inaudible]?

MINISTER D'ATH:

So it's a multi-agency approach but it's the compliance team so whether the compliance teams are coming from the Queensland Police Service, whether they're coming from Liquor and Gaming, in the past we've used Environmental Health Officer's from local government as well, so we have a range of compliance officers across government, across government agencies that we will be using to undertake that work.

REPORTER:

And do you have any idea of how many venues, cafes that you want to be checking on come this deadline?

MINISTER D'ATH:

No, what we'll do is we'll allow the compliance officers to go do their job. As I say, there's 20 teams out across Queensland today and what businesses should expect is they could turn up at any time. Any time of day, any day of the week they could expect a visit. So we call on all businesses to make sure they're doing their bit to comply.

REPORTER:

Premier, yesterday you mentioned that if cases continue in New South Wales that there could be [inaudible]. We've had fewer cases today which is very good news, what's your latest [inaudible]?

PREMIER:

Well I just think we just need to monitor to carefully and if we do see an escalation then I think the Prime Minister can call it. He's got the capability of doing that.

REPORTER:

And your Victorian counterpart, Dan Andrews, said yesterday he was worried about New South Wales not introducing mandatory masks or mandatory stay at home orders. He says that was one of the reason why Victoria had put in strong border control. What are your thoughts about those....

PREMIER:

Well I think we all have to learn from what's happened in other states and if that was very essential and part of the great outcome we saw in Victoria then I think that every state should look at that as well in terms of if they had an outbreak. Last one.

REPORTER:

Premier we're probably about another year away from a vaccine. Is what we're doing the best way to....

PREMIER:

No, not a year because I think we've been hearing that.... from recollection I think it was March or April they were looking at rolling it out here, starting the rollout here in Australia.

REPORTER:

Well, is this the best way? These sort of closures and hot spots? Is this how we're going to deal with this?

PREMIER:

Until there is a vaccine that is widely disseminated through the community. But I think what you've seen is a lot of states and territories are talking to each other at the moment as well and in terms of taking of action, it actually stops the spread and that's what we want to do. We want to contain where there is outbreaks. We want to stop the spread and we want to keep Queenslanders safe. So that's my job. That's what everyone here is working towards and we're taking the best medical advice. And we're also taking the best operational advice with the hard border closure because we are seeing people breaching. And all you need is a couple of people to come into Queensland who've breached with COVID and then we have community transmission. And Queensland at this stage has not had community transmission for 97 days and that's a record that we don't want to see broken.

REPORTER:

Can I get one more from the Deputy Commissioner?

PREMIER:

Yep, last question,

REPORTER:

Sorry, just with the hard border closure at night time tomorrow can Queenslanders still drive back in?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

Queenslanders can come back in but they'll be subject to the hotel quarantine after 1:00am tomorrow morning.

REPORTER:

We're just having a look on the website now, it's saying "if you elect... you're not flying in", it's saying that you need an exemption. Is that the case?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GOLLSCHEWSKI:

So... we'll come back to you on that one. I'm pretty certain that the way we prefer people to come back is by flight. But the direction will be very clear about it so the best thing that people can do is when they get into the border declaration pass it will take them through a series of questions. It will automatically work out what pass they should get and provide them with what the conditions of the entry are. So they need to be very careful to make sure that they fill that out appropriately and that should answer all their questions. Thank you.

[ENDS]

Engagement: Press conference

Speaker/s: Health Minister Yvette D’Ath and Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young

Date: 24 December 2020

Duration: 13 minutes

E&OE

MINISTER D’ATH:

The other case we of the south-east Queensland resident who travelled to the Northern Beaches and greater Sydney and has come back, initially got tested on the 18th with a negative test but has since tested positive, after becoming unwell. That person, I want to say thank you to that gentleman, he has done everything right since coming back into Queensland. He has been isolating himself in quarantine at home, which has significantly reduced any risk of spreading this to other people and this is the gold standard of what we expect of anyone who has travelled from the Northern Beaches and has been told to go into quarantine in Queensland, so we think that person for that and I've remind everyone who has travelled to the greater Sydney areas or the Northern Beaches that you should be getting tested and you should be quarantining as per the directions. I want to thank, also, everybody who has gone out and got tested in the last 48 hours. We have had almost 25,000 tests in 48 hours. We know that it is hot in Queensland and it is uncomfortable to line up for testing, but I want to say thank you because by doing that you are helping keep Queensland safe. We have made sure that our hospital and health services are dealing with those surges and we did see a reduction in waiting times for those tests yesterday, but our message is clear. Our clinics will be open over Christmas. There may be different clinics or different hours so please go into the Queensland COVID website if you need to go and get tested. But importantly, testing will continue over Christmas. If you wake up Christmas Day with any symptoms that are in line with COVID, we still want you to get tested because the vaccine [sic] is not going to take a holiday on Christmas Day. We need you still to get tested and isolate yourself until you get those results and of course if you are from those hotspots and you have been directed to quarantine for 14 days, we still require you to do that. So New South Wales, it has been 10 days since they first reported positive locally acquired cases on the Northern Beaches. We note New South Wales now has over 100 locally acquired cases from that cluster. Queensland has also got a milestone. Today we can report 100 days since we had a locally acquired cases. 100 days, and that is because of the amazing work of all Queenslanders. We want to say thank you on this Christmas Eve for all the great work that people have been doing. Our businesses, the tourism sector, pubs, clubs, hotels, right across Queensland. It is the great work of Queenslanders working together, united, that has meant we had gone 100 days since a locally acquired case, but we cannot afford to get complacent. We believe that we have positive cases in Queensland. We hope that every one of these positive cases are in quarantine and isolating as directed. We have now 53 close contacts from New South Wales. New South Wales are still tracing contacts since the 11 December, so as recent as the last 24

hours, people were being contacted in Queensland and told that they have been in close contact with a positive case since the 11 December. That means we are getting very close to that 14 days, that people are only just finding out now that they have been in contact with someone who is positive and are being asked to isolate. So, anyone who has been to those hotspots, again, Queensland is relying on you to quarantine. Queensland is relying on you to get tested, and to make sure that if you have any symptoms you go back and get tested again if you have already had a negative test. As we saw with this gentleman, his first test was negative, but he is now showed up as positive on a later test. You could still have it, and that is why it is imperative that you maintain that 14 days quarantine. We are concerned about the superyacht case. What this message says is that no one is immune from this, the superyacht in question has not been very cooperative at all in relation to the information being provided to the Queensland Police Service and where they have been so we can identify whether there are any other cases of where they may have got it from. We will leave that for the police to deal with, but we are very disappointed they are not cooperating and providing factual and correct information to the Queensland Police Service. A message on this Christmas Eve is that we encourage you to get tested and stay at home if you are unwell, that if you are from a hotspot and are in Queensland, you must continue to quarantine as directed, and we want to make sure that everyone knows there is testing available over the Christmas period because as much as we all want this to be over, when we wake up on the 1 January will still be living with COVID. We need to be vigilant. For our businesses who are doing a tough, for the tourism sector, again, if you are a Queensland are looking at holiday have a look and see if there are vacancies around Queensland, help support our tourism sector around Queensland. The most damaging thing for the tourism sector in Queensland is if we have a cluster. If we have a cluster breakout in Queensland, that will mean significant restrictions and that will be very damaging to the sector. So, I know the tourism sector is doing it hard right now, but it will be far worse if this case goes out into our community and that is why we have to do what we are doing, and we will continue to work with the tourism sector to support them and make sure that we are encouraging people to a holiday in Queensland. Anywhere else in the country outside of the hot spot are welcome to come to Queensland, we're good to go, and we want see your holiday here The last thing I will say before I head over to Dr Young is we know at Christmas time everyone was too hard, we want to be close to each other, please let's follow the social distancing rules. Let's make sure that we are not handshaking, that we are washing our hands and sanitising regularly, we are following all the rules that have been there since the beginning. We ask this of venues, but we ask this of citizens who are visiting Queensland and of Queensland residents also, please let us stay safe, let's make sure that we did not have anyone NICU over Christmas. We want to keep people out of our hospital, and we want to keep people out of ICU beds. Dr Young?

DR YOUNG:

So, two new cases in Queensland overnight, the first a woman in her 20s who arrived in Cairns on a superyacht. All of the people who arrived in Cairns on the superyacht went into hotel quarantine except for six crew who remained on the yacht to maintain it and keep it safe. We are now testing those six crew and ensuring that none of them have COVID-19. The superyacht originated in the Maldives, and then came to cans, so we are trying to work through with them how it got onto that yacht. It is a lesson to us all that superyacht that have come from elsewhere in the world, the matter how long they may have been at sea, are a risk,

and are required to quarantine all of the people on that yacht either in hotel quarantine for those few remaining crew that must stay on the yacht as per Maritime safety, Queensland's requirements, they could stay on the yacht but we still manage them to ensure the focus not get through that route into Queensland. Our second case is a gentleman in his 40s, who went to the Northern Beaches on the 12th of December, and then stayed in Sydney after that, came back into Queensland on the 18th of December. He went into home quarantine after originally testing negative when he first came back, and has been there since. I commend him for what he has done, he has followed every single requirement to the letter. He became unwell, so he went and got tested again, and came back late last night as a positive case, so he is now being transferred to the PA Hospital. We will manage that. we don't believe - but we will talk to him again - we don't believe he has been in contact with anyone in the community other than close household contacts who are now in quarantine for 14 days at. He has done everything that was asked of him, we are confirming that now to make sure that there is no one else out there who also needs to go into quarantine. He was not one of the 53 people that New South Wales Health has let us know about, who are close contacts of known cases, he was someone else. That is why it is so important, don't wait for a text message from New South Wales that you are a close contact from someone of the Northern Beaches, if you have been in the Northern Beaches, you have been asked to go into home quarantine up until just recently when everyone goes into hotel quarantine, you must absolutely stay in the home quarantine and should not have contact with anyone else, and you should not have visitors to your house. That is very important. I am concerned that we do have the virus now in Queensland, we have seen those positive sewage results, and we know there are a lot of people who have come back into Queensland from that Northern Beach area and from other parts of Sydney. It is really important that everyone goes back to maintaining that social distancing, and anyone with any symptoms please immediately come forward and get tested. We will have clinics open all through Christmas and New Year, they might be slightly different to so please go on the website and check which is your local clinic and the hours in which it is operational. If you have any symptoms please come forward, as those over 20,000 Queenslanders have in the last few days. That is what we can do to protect everyone. If I can briefly mention there has been some confusion about the new requirement that hospitality venues must have electronic recording. That is on the value, the value must have a way to electronically record everyone who comes into that venue, I just that information for a minimum of 30 days, and a maximum of 56 days. That is critical. At this stage we have not required the use of specific QR codes, I know that has happened in New South Wales, we have not done that in Queensland, but if you do not have a smart phone you can still go to your favourite venue, it is just that that venue will have to capture your details in an electronic format in their database, so they had that information too. It will be kept private, and it will only be used to give to our contact tracing officer if it is needed. I will take questions.

REPORTER:

In terms of hugging, are you allowed to hug Mum and Dad, or Grandpa?

DR YOUNG

I would expect that in your close known contacts. Your close relatives are people who live in your household. I would not be doing that in broader groups outside. I just think that is a risk

that is not necessary. If you are having Christmas Day with your close family, then you are having a lot of time with them so you would be deeper close contact, so yes if that is your normal tradition you can have your close family members. I just say to people think carefully, maybe it is not the time to have your great-grandmother, it is the time to think how best you can keep your older relatives, your most vulnerable relatives safe.

REPORTER

Do you know how recently the yacht was overseas or in Australian waters?

DR YOUNG

I do have, but I do not know over the top of my head, but it is fairly recent that came into Cairns, because all the people listed in the 14 day quarantine period. We will just have to check because New South Wales has had that unlinked case, someone who lives in Western Sydney who is a driver for the New South Wales Health Department, who moves people, international travellers from the airport to their health hotel. So that person became positive, initially it was thought from one of the cases that he had driven from the airport to the health hotel, but no genomic sequencing has shown that he has actually got the Avalon cluster genome, but they do not know how he has acquired that. He is an unlinked case at this stage. If that remains unlinked, it will be 28 days from that date before we could open.

REPORTER

[inaudible] the process there?

DR YOUNG

I know that those cricket matches which have been played in other states, those cricket players have been part of a bubble, and we have had that experience before, the process were used for the NRL, the AFL, other sporting codes, so these cricketers have been part of a bubble, they will go into Sydney and continue to be part of a bubble, then if the decision is for the match to go ahead and the current arrangements have not yet been decided, they would remain in a bubble and come into quarantine in Queensland and continue to be part of the bubble. But, I stress that those discussions are happening now and things could very well change. Nothing has been determined at this stage. If all of those things are in place at the moment, if they have been in a bubble in New South Wales and not come into contact with the general community in Sydney, if they remain in that bubble coming into Brisbane, then I think it could be done, but there is a lot of work to be done before the decision is made.

REPORTER

There have been a lot of complaints about people taking swabs, there were long queues people believe it when they saw that, do you think?

DR YOUNG:

They immediately put into place more resources which led to an improvement in waiting times, so those waiting times are much, much lower now, I would encourage anyone with any symptoms or if they have been in New South Wales in Greater Sydney to come forward to get tested today. It varies, you can go online, you can find out, it varies throughout the state.

If you go to one place and there are very large queues go online and see whether there are other sites.

REPO

How worried are you about the UK strain, the new one?

DR

Yes, so initially we were told about a new variant in the UK that was potentially up to 40-70 per cent more infectious and that that was taking over the strains that were circulating in the southern part of England. So, we were aware of that, we've gone back and checked all of our people who've arrived from the UK over the last month, they've all had their genome of the virus sequenced, and none of them have that particular strain, which is good. We know there've been four strains interstate – four people interstate – with that variant, two in Melbourne and two in Sydney. They've been in hotel quarantine, so I am not concerned, they should've been managed there and the strain that is circulating due to the Northern Beaches cluster is not that strain, so that is all reassuring. Now overnight we've heard of another strain with further mutations – another variant – with further mutations that looks like it might've started in South Africa, at least they've picked it up there, and it is also being picked up then in the UK. And the early information – but it is very, very, very early – the early information is that it might be even more infectious. I think that means for us here in Queensland that we have to be even more cautious than we've been to date with anyone who comes from overseas into hotel quarantine. So I have spoken to all of my colleagues around the state this morning, and said that we have to be exceptionally cautious about anyone from overseas who is in hotel quarantine, that we cannot have those fresh air breaks which have now stopped, that we cannot have people leaving hotel quarantine for any reason unless it is a threat to their life. Of course we have to provide healthcare services to them if they need them urgently. If they don't need them urgently, they should be using telehealth to provide that service and of course if anyone becomes positive in hotel quarantine we immediately move them to a hospital. So we have upped our response, not that I am concerned by our hotel quarantine in Queensland, it has proved to be very, very effective for us in Queensland until now, but I have increased some of the security and the arrangements around it.

REPO

[inaudible] on the Northern Beaches [inaudible] is there concern that people in his home were going out into the community still, or were they isolating with them?

DR

He was isolating separate to the other people in his home. So, he was genuinely doing that and I am very confident about that, but despite that we are still asking the other people who live in that home to go into 14 days quarantine, recognising the enormous impost on them and also to everyone in Queensland who has been asked to go into quarantine at this very special time of year. It is unfortunate but we must all do it and those other people who live in that home, I think, are low risk but they need to go into home quarantine for the next 14 days.

REPO

If he arrived on the 18th of December, was the requirement at that stage to isolate in your home for 14 days?

DR

Yes, because he came from the Northern Beaches. So he has followed all of the requirements that he has been asked to do and he has managed them exceptionally well.

REPO

And on the other case in North Queensland, is that positive case an Australian citizen?

DR

I don't have that detail, sorry.

REPO

Health Minister, just to clarify, with the venues who are required to have the electronic check-ins now, if they don't, under the health directives, can they actually be fined?

MIN

If they don't follow the health directive, a venue can be fined. But the health directive is about saying we want to make sure if a contact tracer, or public health unit official walks into your venue and says 'I need to trace everyone who has been at this venue on this date at this time', that they can provide us that list electronically in a very short period of time. So that is our main aim. How they choose to collect that, we're being flexible and understanding that there will be venues from time-to-time that don't have internet access or other accessibility issues, and there will be some patrons who don't have a phone, they're not travelling with anyone with a phone and the venue itself doesn't have internet access, that there may need to be other measures in place. What we're trying to move away from though, is there is venues who have paper registers just sitting on the front counter, and I saw it again last night, sitting on the front counter as an option to either do the paper register or a QR code. It really is the obligation of the business to stop that group coming in and checking that anyone in that group has a phone. Now I saw a couple of people yesterday, one didn't have a phone that could scan but the person they were with did and I pointed out to them that their friend could actually check both of them in. So it doesn't have to be the case that every single person in your group has a phone. As long as one person in your group has a phone that can scan a QR code then you can scan everyone in. So we just need everyone to do their part because we need electronic records and New South Wales has found this, that there was significant delays in accessing this data. The difference between being able to contact everyone within an hour of being known that they're a close contact to a positive case as opposed to days because the venue says "well, we've got all this paper based" or they can't provide the electronic quickly – every day counts when you are a close contact to someone who has tested positive. Every single day. And what we are seeing from New South Wales is there are still people being traced today who have been in contact with someone from the 11th of December. That is a significant period of time. We are getting to the end of the 14 day period and some people who are close contacts still don't know they're close contacts. So that's why we are asking all businesses to do this. And we want to work with businesses. We're not out there with a big

stick wanting to fine every business but we do need to change our behaviour out there and do everything possible to store this information electronically so if we have a positive case we can get those details the same day and we can let people know what's happening.

REPORTER:

Has the Government signalled any interest in taking the Sydney Test if they can't hold it there? Would we have two at the Gabba? We've got every other sporting event.

MINISTER D'ATH:

Well, if we can agree on how this bubble works and this bubble will be very stringent. It is really important. And can I be clear – when we talk about exemptions this is still a COVID safe plan that protects the community. And if that agreement can't be reached then it doesn't go ahead. But we're hopeful that that can. If that means they don't want to go to Sydney, and I don't know what's happening in Sydney. I don't know if they're going to have crowds at the Test in Sydney.

REPORTER:

Have you signalled any interest though with the Sydney people or Cricket Australia?

MINISTER D'ATH:

Look, I'm not liaising directly with Cricket Australia. That's being done by the Sports Minister. Where... what Health are doing and what the Chief Health Officer's Public Health Unit is doing is negotiating what that would look like if they came here. If we can agree on how that would work to keep the community safe then that's great. If they want to play more games here we've welcomed sport of all different kinds here in Queensland we're happy to do that as long as we can reach an agreement on how we can make sure that's COVID-safe.

REPORTER:

Late yesterday you announced that you're lifting the Reef Tour Boat restrictions...people have been complaining up there because they haven't had full capacity. Are they at full capacity now?

MINISTER D'ATH:

I'm not sure if overnight they've got full capacity but I have no doubt that tourists and Queenslanders alike would be eager to get out onto the Great Barrier Reef. It is beautiful place to go, it is summer in Queensland. There is no better place to go than to go visit the Great Barrier Reef and go out and see that beautiful world heritage area. So we encourage Queenslanders to do that and I'm hoping with the agreement that was reached with the boating industry around COVID-safe plans that they will see a rapid increase in their numbers.

REPORTER:

Can we just clarify something with the CHO about the [inaudible]? How many people were on the boat and where exactly is the boat now roughly on the water?

DR YOUNG:

It's in Cairns and I don't know the full number. There are still six crew left on the boat.

REPORTER:

Is there any inlet? It's more [inaudible]...

DR YOUNG:

I don't know where it is.

REPORTER:

Can I clarify? Is the case in the southeast...is it the second connected to the Northern Beaches in Queensland?

DR YOUNG:

Yes. So we had one case that came here on the 16th and the 17th and is now back in Sydney. And then we've got this case. They're the two.

REPORTER:

Is there any indication that the people that came on the super yacht had any contact with anybody else?

DR YOUNG:

No. They've gone straight from the super yacht into quarantine.

REPORTER:

And when you say the super yacht is not cooperating with you, what information specifically do you want from them that they're not giving?

DR YOUNG:

I want to know exactly where they've been and who's come onto that yacht while they've been overseas.

REPORTER:

With the electronic records [inaudible] if there's thing like charity lunches [inaudible] if someone doesn't have a fixed address or phone number how do they sign in [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

The venue needs to organise that so they've got lists of who's been there so there's a way of contacting those people.

REPORTER:

And what if they don't have [inaudible]?

DR YOUNG:

Well the venue needs to find a way that those people can be contacted.

REPORTER:

[inaudible]

MINISTER D'ATH:

Look the Commonwealth very quickly declared the cluster in the Northern Beaches as a recognised hotspot for the purpose of Commonwealth emergency relief and I have no doubt that New South Wales welcomed that decision quite early on. Look as far as support, we would all like to see support and cooperation across the country and we would all like to have the support on our borders. Our police have been doing an incredible job but I know particularly in Victoria and Queensland would welcome any support from the Australian Defence Force in helping us manage those borders. We have seen people trying to come over our borders. Knowing that people are frustrated and wanting to get into the state...but that's all the more reason we need to make sure we know who is coming into the state and we know where they're coming from so we know we can protect everyone in Queensland. So we certainly welcome it, but that is a decision of the Commonwealth.

REPORTER:

Just on borders there [inaudible] people parking across the New South Wales side and then walking across the border or catching an Uber to cross the border. Is the government aware of this [inaudible]?

MINISTER D'ATH:

Anyone catching an Uber...if they're in a vehicle they're still required to have a border pass. It doesn't matter if you're an Uber, a bus a truck, whatever you are, whatever vehicle you're in you are required to have a border pass declaration to cross the border into Queensland. For those who want to flaunt the law there are fines. There are fines for doing so for those who want to give us false information and make false declarations there are fines and we will be implanting these fines. This is about keeping people safe. It's about making sure our economy can keep operating. That tourism can keep inviting people in and holidaying in Queensland. But most importantly it is about keeping people safe and alive. We are still seeing record numbers of positive cases and deaths overseas. Record numbers of deaths. In the United States 3000...3500 people a day are dying. This is real. We need to take it seriously and for those who don't want to comply with the law then they will be fined.

REPORTER:

Minister just quickly when you've got the Chief Health Officer saying that she believes there could be cases in Queensland now that we don't know about, is it really appropriate to do things like relax restrictions on Reef Tour operators further?

MINISTER D'ATH:

Well let's be clear again. When we use these terms "relaxations" and "exemptions"...these changes can only occur in a COVID-safe way. So the changes to the charter boats and the boating industry in Queensland are because the Chief Health Officer and Queensland Health had been satisfied with the COVID-safe plans that had been developed. So there are still arrangements in place – and part of those arrangements that were announced yesterday

include that everyone has to have an allocated seat on those boats – we know exactly who is on those boats that when they're inside which is far greater risk than outside and we've talked about that and the Chief Health Officer has talked about that numerous times...when you're inside that you have a seat, you are allocated that seat and you are staying in that seat and you are not mingling. That is how we reduce the risk of transmitting COVID. So the Chief Health Officer has been satisfied that those COVID-safe plans can be put in place and that is no different to what we have done working with a whole lot of other industries and sectors right across Queensland to develop COVID-safe plans including the sporting sector to ensure things can still happen, but done in a safe way and reducing our risk. Thanks.

[ENDS]

Released under RTI - DPO