

PRESS CONFERENCE - AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT HOUSE, ACT**TRANSCRIPT**

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PRIME MINISTER: Thank you. Thank you for the way over the course of this week you have been responding to the very significant changes that we've been asking you to make to your lives and to your livelihoods. Over the course of the past week, people moving around places like Melbourne and Sydney have fallen by two-thirds. In the last two weeks, it's fallen by around 80 per cent. There has been a significant change in the way that people are taking on these messages and supporting each other all around the country. On behalf of all the Premiers and Chief Ministers and myself, the members of the National Cabinet, we simply want to say to you, Australia - thank you. Keep doing it. You're saving lives and you're saving livelihoods. This has been a significant shift. We need to see it keep taking place, all around the country. But you have encouraged us greatly. You have encouraged us by the way in which you have taken this on. We've called on you as Australians to combine together in this effort and your response over the past week has been simply magnificent. We always knew Australians are up to this test. And you're proving it, each and every day. Let's keep doing it, Australia. And we will continue to get through this together. Washing your hands, staying 1.5m away from each other, only going out when you have to, to do the necessities, and returning. And just doing simple things. This afternoon, people won't be going to the pub. But they will be at home, just with their family, on their own, and they will be FaceTiming and other things with their friends. They will have those conversations through that method. It's a big change to our way of life. But we're staying connected to each other. We might have to keep our distance, but it doesn't mean we have to disconnect from each other. This is also a very important message about supporting each other, supporting each other's mental health, and ensuring that no Australian, even though we have to be isolated, no Australian should have to go through this alone.

Last night, I joined the G20 leaders all around the world and I was very proud of my country. I was very proud of the response that I'm getting from the Australian people. I was very proud of the fact that together we have ensured that we have the highest testing rate, it would seem, in the world today. And the efforts that have been done by our health and medical professionals at the Commonwealth and state level to implement those arrangements. Whether it's been the travel bans, or the other restrictions we've put on Australian life, all of these things are making a difference. I can assure you I would rather be in Australia now with the way we are dealing with this together than in any other country

in the world today. I was filled with great concern for in so many countries, what they are facing at the moment. But here in Australia it is a vital time. But we're getting on top of this and we can keep on top of this and we need to keep doing what we have been doing.

This weekend, the challenge will be there again. Let's keep doing the right thing. Let's keep saving lives. Let's keep saving livelihoods. And, you know, businesses are adapting as well. Distilleries are making hand sanitiser. Large companies, like Woolworths, are completely changing how they do things and employing more Australians. Cafes are changing how they do things. Businesses are being agile and they are adapting, even under significant strain and stress. But for many others, it has been devastating. There have been long queues, there have been frustrating delays as people are getting access to the strongest support from our safety net. You know, our social security system, our safety net in this country, our health system in this country is something I was reminded of again last night that we can be very proud of. In many countries where they are moving, they are simply getting their standard of social support to the same standard that Australians have in normal circumstances through our social security system. And so by extending the support of our social security system, by providing greater financial support and greater eligibility then we are able to help more people. So, in particular, the 10 percent of GDP measures that we already have in place more than matches up to those that are being done around the world. But I promise you - we will be doing more and I will say more about that shortly.

I want to assure you that we're in two fights. We are battling this thing on two fronts and they are both important. We're battling this virus with all the measures that we're putting in place and we're battling the economic crisis that has been caused as a result of the coronavirus. Both will take lives. Both will take livelihoods. And it's incredibly important that we continue to focus on battling both of these enemies to Australia's way of life. I'm watching closely and am deeply concerned, as are all Premiers and Chief Ministers, by the devastating impacts on our economy and we will all be doing more to provide whatever support and assistance we can to help Australians and the businesses that employ them through this very, very difficult time. No decision that we're taking on the health front that has these terrible economic impacts is being taken lightly. Every day someone is in a job, for just another day, is worth fighting for. Where the health advice enables that, every day I can keep an Australian in work, every day I can get that little bit more of support by keeping those things running. The more we can do that, every day matters, because it matters to the person whose job it is, it matters to the business that has been built by someone over many years, it matters to their families, and that means it matters to me and it matters to all the Premiers and Chief Ministers. So, we will not take these decisions lightly. We will not take them for a matter of convenience because every decision we are taking we understand has very real personal impacts for individuals and for families, and individuals and for families, and the stresses that it can place upon them at the most difficult times.

Today, we have decided to take further actions targeting what is our greatest area of concern and Dr Murphy will speak more to that. What we're announcing today enables us to deal with the increasing pressure we have from Australians coming home. The reason we can focus on that is because of the great work Australians have done, particularly over the course of the past week, on getting on top of their own movements and their own behaviours. It means we can focus even more on these critical areas that are our greatest risk at this point in time. Two-thirds of the cases that we currently have are from an Australian who has come home: two-thirds. That is very different to what we're seeing in other parts of the world. Our biggest issue, the biggest number of cases, relate to this. And as time has gone on, the risk of those who are returning from other parts of the world actually increases because more countries have the virus. Where Australians have been,

they have been there for longer and they have been more exposed. And so we are going to take further measures today to strengthen the enforcement of the self-isolation that is put in place for people returning through our airports in particular.

This is the isolation declaration card for coronavirus. Everyone who has been coming into Australia now for some time has had to fill this out. On this, they make a declaration. They say who they are, they say where they are going to self-isolate, they tell us what their phone number is, their passport numbers, and they sign up to self-isolation. This is enforceable by law. If you have come back into Australia, you need to live up to this pledge. And the state and territory governments are going to make sure you do. And there are strong penalties for those who don't comply with this and those states and territories are already moving in their enforcement measures.

But today we believe we need to go even further. In addition to the arrival declaration and the support of legislation that is put behind that. So, by no later than midnight tomorrow, that is 11:59pm Saturday states and territories will be quarantining all arrivals through our airports, in hotels and other accommodation facilities for the two weeks of their mandatory self-isolation before they are able to return to their home. If their home is in South Australia or in Perth or in Tasmania and they have arrived in Melbourne, they will be quarantining in Melbourne. If it's in Sydney, it will be in Sydney, if it's Brisbane, and so on. This same situation we put in place, particularly for the case that you will be aware of in Western Australia in relation to the Vasco da Gama and the returning vessel there in terms of these arrangements. And the Western Australia Premier Mark McGowan will be having more to say about that.

But each state will be doing the heavy lifting themselves to support their other states. And I thank them for the reciprocal nature in the way they are putting these arrangements in place. It is a great team to be part of with the Premiers and the Chief Ministers. They understand they need to share each other's burdens to ensure that we can manage this issue together as a nation. This will be enforced by the state and territory governments. The Commonwealth will be supporting them with all manner of assistance, which will relate to the work done by the Border Force, logisticians, and other supports that will be necessary, but those arrangements will be run by the state and territory governments in each state.

We will be supporting them also by providing members of the Australian Defence Force to assist in the compliance with these arrangements. Now, I want to stress that members of the Australian Defence Force are not authorised as enforcement officers regarding prosecution in states and territories. That is the responsibility of law enforcement officers so sworn in those jurisdictions. The ADF will be there to support those enforcement authorities. And so we will be turning out the defence forces to support compliance with these new arrangements. It will require that cooperative and facilitative support and I have no doubt the defence forces will do that in the most sensitive way they can, but it is necessary.

The other thing we are doing is we will be supporting the states and territories in the important work they have of enforcing the existing isolation arrangements for people who are already here. The ADF will be supporting those states and territories with compliance checks to ensure that people are at their residences, that they have so sworn that they would be at. To ensure we get compliance with the self-isolation. Again, if there is a situation where people are non-compliant, of course the enforcement authority is the state jurisdiction and the relevant law enforcement agency in that state. But the ADF will be there to put boots on the ground, to support them in their enforcement efforts, and I thank the ADF for their great support in turning up to this task. We believe these important actions are the most important we can take right now because of what you've done,

Australia. By you getting onboard with the changes that you have needed to make, this means we can target our efforts even more into these areas, where we believe the most critical concern is right now.

Now, also today on the economy, we were briefed by the Treasury Secretary, Dr Kennedy, and states and territories were given a very extensive understanding of the impacts that we're potentially dealing with. The Treasurer and I will have more to say about that in the next few days, as we are preparing to put in place the third tranche of the measures that will be there to support Australians further as we go through the many difficult months that are ahead. The thing about an economy is your society does depend on it and so do governments. You can't run a country without an economy. And we are doing everything we can to ensure we maintain as much of that economy as we can through this crisis, to support all of the essential services that are so necessary at a time like this.

Part of that plan that we will be announcing will be to seek to hibernate Australian businesses. This will be a very innovative approach in the circumstances we find ourselves in. We will have more to say about this, but I discussed it with the Premiers and Chief Ministers today. The idea is pretty simple, there are businesses which will have to close their doors. They will have to keep them closed either because we have made it necessary for them to do so, or simply there is just not the business to keep their doors open. We want those businesses to start again. And we do not want over the course of the next six months or as long as it takes, for those businesses to be so saddled by debt, so saddled by rental payments, so saddled by other liabilities that they will not be able to start again on the other side. We want these businesses to effectively go into a hibernation, which means on the other side, the employees come back, the opportunities come back, the economy comes back. This will underpin our strategy as we go to the third tranche of our economic plan, and that will include support by states and territories of managing the very difficult issue of commercial tenancies and also dealing ultimately with residential tenancies as well.

So, in conclusion, I thank you for your patience. But I thank you most of all for the great job you have done this week, Australia. We have got to keep doing it. We have got to keep sticking together. We have got to keep supporting each other. We've got to keep sharing the right information with each other. And we have got to stick together and support each other through what I know is becoming day by day, a much tougher job for all of us. We can do it. I'm so encouraged by your reaction this week, as are all the Premiers and Chief Ministers. The next few weeks will be particularly vital and so we're getting this together at a time when it is most necessary and your response this week has been simply awesome.

Thank you. I'm going to pass you on to Dr Murphy.

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: Thanks, Prime Minister. So, we have just over 3,000 cases in Australia and we are worried. We are worried about the growth. But as the Prime Minister said we're in an almost unique situation in this country in that even now, a substantial part of our new cases are returned travellers. Our numbers have not been helped by a recent cruise ship, which has given lots of cases in Sydney. And we are still seeing significant numbers of returned travellers with the virus developing an infection and in many cases passing it on to their families. More than two-thirds are returned travellers, and a significant proportion of the other cases have been transmitted from returned travellers.

So, the Health Protection Principal Committee yesterday recommended to governments that the single most important thing we can do, is completely stop the capacity for any returning traveller transmitting the virus. Obviously we would look after them when they

get the virus, as some will do, as they continue to come home. Coming from countries now that have very large outbreaks, so the risk is getting higher and higher, as the number of flights reduce, but the risk in those countries increase. This is a really important thing.

But we are also worried about community transmission. That is the single most important concern for the health experts. There is small amounts of community transmission in some pockets in Sydney, which is probably the most significant in the country, but tiny pockets in other states. We think that we are pretty confident with our testing regime, which is one of the highest rates of testing per population in the world, with one of the lowest positivity rates. But we're not kidding ourselves - if community transmission becomes significant, that is the real serious concern. That's why these social distancing measures are just so important. That's why they have to be for the long haul. For several months. So we have to have sustainable measures that every single citizen complies with every minute of the day, working from home where possible, going out only for the necessities, not mingling with your friends in a shopping centre or in a park. Practise social distancing, hand hygiene, cough etiquette. Every minute of the day. And as the Prime Minister said, we have seen dramatic improvements in the practises of everyday Australians. But we are watching really closely. And very, very - daily attention is being paid to, any growth in community transmission so that we can make any further recommendations to the government as necessary.

But at the moment, we are doing a very good job. But we have to have really good compliance with this social distancing to make it work. We can't have anyone breaking the rules, being stupid, being cavalier, and not taking this seriously. You have seen what's happened in countries over the world, where big community outbreaks have taken off. We are getting on top of our outbreaks, our state and territory public health officials are doing a fantastic job. But we have to very closely watch this community transmission. That's our biggest concern at the moment.

Thank you.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks Brendan, Katherine?

JOURNALIST: Today, National Cabinet was I believe, was to discuss trigger points for moving to stage 3 lock downs or imposing the next phase of restrictions. Were any trigger points resolved or agreed upon, and also is it reasonable to interpret that from what you have just said about the proximity of the next tranche of measures that you want to sequence any further lockdowns with the next phase of the hibernation package, for want of a better term, do you want to sequence those two things - so you go into lockdown once the hibernation package is in full view?

PRIME MINISTER: The National Cabinet, as I said, is very aware that the restrictions we've placed on people - families, households, businesses, everyone - have been very significant. We want to ensure that as far as practicable that we continue to pursue this both from the health point of view and ensuring we minimise the impact on people, particularly economically, and we do understand the need to try and keep these things as close together as we possibly can. But the great point about today was, is the progress that has been able to be made in the last week means that is giving us more time to consider these other critical issues. The states and territories do have different experiences with the outbreaks in their various locations and we will continue to work on what other possible restrictions might be necessary and we will continue to work on the circumstances in which they might be introduced. But what we are saying right now is the thing that we need to take action on right now, after the good response - great response - we've had from Australians to what we announced, particularly last Sunday. This gives us the opportunity to do that and to continue to work on the economic supports as well that will be there to help people should those other restrictions become necessary.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, in the announcement you have just made about the new quarantine measures for Australians returning home, can you give us a sense of the scale of what you're anticipating in terms of the number of people who will need to go through this new quarantine restriction?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, to give you an idea, yesterday there were 7,120 arrivals at our airports around the country. To give you an idea of what that was this same time last year, it was 48,725. That gives you an idea of what has happened over the course of these past few weeks and months. The number of arrivals now are at a level which the states and territories believe means they are able to practically implement these types of arrangements. And that coincides with the risk that is increasingly presented by arrivals at this stage, as the virus has spread more broadly around the world, that obviously has increased the risk to those who have been overseas for longer. For those who are seeking to make their way back, know these arrangements will be in place and they are mandatory. They should also know that it won't be before too long where it will be very difficult to get back to Australia. The coronavirus has not been a secret for the last several months and for those Australians who were able to get back over the last several months, they have been able to come back under much more convenient arrangements. Now, it is getting a lot tougher and it is getting a lot stricter and so I am sure Australians will consider that depending on where they are in the world today.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, how much do you expect that this is going to cost? Is the taxpayer going to have to foot that bill regarding these quarantine arrangements? And in terms of the concern regarding community transmission and not going unless absolutely necessary, can you say something about schools? Is anything going to change there given there is transmission going on in schools?

PRIME MINISTER: First of all, in terms of the cost, the cost of the accommodation and all those arrangements are being managed by states and territories. They are putting this in place. What we are doing is providing that support through all the other measures through the Australian Defence Force or the Australian Border Force and there are transport arrangements. But that is being worked on together right now between the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Defence Force, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, directly with each of those state and territory jurisdictions to ensure they can get the measures in place. The greatest stress and strain will be in New South Wales because they have the highest number of arrivals of any of the states and territories. For some, for example, Tasmania, there are no international arrivals to Tasmania because they don't have an international airport. So, it will be disproportionate on those states and territories. That is why I do thank them. Those states that get the biggest share of arrivals are really having to step up in the national interest and I think that is a tremendous effort. But equally in Western Australia, with that cruise ship, they are stepping up there too and I want to thank them for that. The arrangements, how that will apply to the individuals, they are being determined by the states and territories. The Commonwealth is not involved in that decision.

On the issue of education, I'm glad you asked me. We met again yesterday with the Australian Education Union. I will be issuing a statement on behalf of the National Cabinet that we agreed this morning. In each of the states and territories, they will be pursuing their own arrangements directly with those schools between now and the end of term. Term finishes at the end of next week for Queensland, at the end of the following week for other states and territories. We've had, I think, very constructive discussions with the union movement this week. But at the end of the day, it needs to be sorted out in each state and territory. Each state and territory will be doing that in response to the requests that have been made of them. We have a variance in attendance levels across the country. The

Premier of New South Wales tells me that attendance in New South Wales is down below 20 per cent, but in South Australia it is many times higher, as it is in Tasmania. This will actually impact on how we're rolling out the influenza vaccinations as well. We have put arrangements in place for those states and territories - they will be sorting that out on the ground but some may have to work more through GPs and pharmacists, because the children won't be at school. In other places, like South Australia, they will be in a better position to do that. But the point is, as we have now entered into a transition phase with schools, where education needs to continue to be delivered, but over the next few weeks, the schools themselves will be preparing, together with - on a national basis, seeking to get some consistency on this - about when schools reopen on the other side of the school holidays. It won't look like it has looked up until now. But what is important is that vulnerable families, the parents who have jobs - as I have said to you, what's an essential job? A job that someone has. If they are in a position where they cannot provide the suitable arrangements for their children to learn at home, then I'm assured that no child will be turned away under those circumstances. So, I thank the unions for their support and the constructive way they are approaching it. But you will see some different arrangements between states and territories as we go into the term break.

JOURNALIST: PM, can you walk us through a bit more of the hibernation plan, is it your idea that a business that rolls down the shutter on its business at one point, six months later is allowed to reopen without \$1 more debt accruing? And who is going to have to take a hit? The banks think they might be able to capitalise on someone's mortgage. Are you hoping they won't do that? There are local councils, state governments.

PRIME MINISTER: Sure.

JOURNALIST: So can you walk us through how that will work?

PRIME MINISTER: We will make announcements on the details on this. I simply today wanted to set out what the objective was. There will be a burden for everyone to share. And that will include the business as well. There will be landlords who will suffer. There will be the banks who will be having to make arrangements with them. Whether councils are involved in providing waivers on rates and things of that nature, that will be something states work through. Whether land tax will be relieved for those who have tenants in a distressed situation, all of these things are what we are having to work through. It isn't a simple process. But the intent is, as far as possible, to achieve what you have said, Chris, and that is to ensure that a business that through no fault of its own, just like if there's any Australian who has lost a job through no fault of their own, we are simply trying to preserve and support them in the best way we possibly can for the simple reason that A; they are Australian, and that is what we should do, and B; that on the other side we want them to surge again. We want Australia to rise again on the other side of this and to go forward strongly. Sorry, Sam?

JOURNALIST: Childcare is obviously very important to that. You have a situation at the moment where parents are paying for childcare where they are being urged not to attend or in some cases they have lost their job and they can no longer afford it. Centres want you to guarantee a slice of that \$9 billion in the childcare subsidy so they can not only pay their staff but allow these parents not to pay for care that they are not getting. What is going to happen with that? Because at the moment they are saying that centres are going to have to close.

PRIME MINISTER: Well, this is one of the very sensitive areas that we're working through, Sam. We're working on a plan to deal with that with those many premises around the country. They are an essential part of keeping the economy running for those who are still part of it and for those who are still going to work and we understand that. We are working through these issues, through a list of priorities, and that is one that is certainly very high

to the top of the list, about how we're supporting people who remain in work to be able to stay in work and their child care support is a key part of that. But we haven't finalised those arrangements yet. In terms of the health issues around child-care centres, well, they are the same for schools. The health advice on those issues has not changed. And so we would continue to see child care, for particularly for those who are at work, especially I should say, exclusively I should say - for those who are at work as being a fundamental service that is required to help us get through. Jen?

JOURNALIST: We've heard clips from the Chinese President this morning saying that this is a global emergency and it's, we're all fighting a common enemy. Yes, that's true. But is that enough? Should China take more of a responsibility here? And were you given any assurances last night from the Chinese President?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, all leaders last night set out what they were doing to address the twin crises and this was acknowledged and the point that I made last night, was about the fact that we're confronting a twin crisis here. And that was accepted, and I think broadly understood and supported as we all put in place measures. We were talking about what we were doing to confront the virus and there is a massive commonality. Testing - so important. And the fact that Australia has, based on the data we have, one of if not the highest testing regime in the world, at some 700 per 100,000 - I mean, Korea comes closest to that, but as I said the other day, other places have testing regimes - and we are 25 times higher than that, and we're about 5 times higher than the UK on my last reading of the data. So, testing, contact tracing; incredibly important. And that's why we have surged in support from Defence Forces, as have the states in recruiting large numbers of people to do the contact tracing to get on top of this. Self-isolation and its enforcement, which is what we have been talking about today. We're all very committed around the world to putting in whatever resources we need to do to get the antivirals in place and to find the vaccine. All of one mind on all those issues. Other matters around border arrangements, keeping the supply lines open for essential medical supplies. That's very important. And there was broad commitment to those sorts of things. On the economy side, we discussed all the various stimulus and support and social security mechanisms we are putting in place, and, as I said, Australia on all of those marks, I think fares very, very, very well.

In terms of where it started and how it started - not a time for that. It's a time for saving lives. It's a time for saving livelihoods. And that is what everyone has a common purpose to do. The last point that was also discussed - and I noted particularly in relationship to our Pacific family - is we're a developed economy. We have one of the best health systems in the world and we come into this with a very strong balance sheet and a strong economy. But there are many countries around the world, for whom that is not true. And we should brace ourselves, I think, for some very devastating images around the world and we are all going to have to do our part as a global community to support those who are not in as strong a position as the G20 nations. And here, that means our Pacific family. I noted that we would be taking particular responsibility, with our cousins across the ditch in New Zealand, to ensure that we do everything we can to support our Pacific family. Tom?

JOURNALIST: Two questions. First of all, will the government consider at any stage repatriating the 10 or 20,000 Australians still stranded overseas? And, secondly, have you had a conversation with Gladys Berejiklian about the Ruby Princess situation? Can we expect any kind of an investigation into that?

PRIME MINISTER: We've had a number of conversations about that. We are learning the lessons from that episode. And a lot of what you have seen here today is as a result of that. So, we will continue to do that. I mean Gladys and I and the Premiers - we are talking all the time, every day. We are working closely together to ensure that we can stay on top

of this for the interests of saving lives and saving livelihoods. That is the only agenda, that is the only issue, that is the only focus that we have. In relation to those Australians who are overseas, yes, we have got an arrangement currently in place for those who are stranded in South America, in Peru. And we've also had an arrangement where we have already just brought back a group from the United States and Hawaii. And they have come back. And they are currently in the Swiss Hotel. There will be some Australians who are in places where they have found themselves through no fault of their own, isolated, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is working on all of those cases. But for those Australians who have had an opportunity and - even more amazingly, those who continued to leave the country, even after a 'do not travel' advice was given, then I don't think they could expect their fellow Australians to think that the Australian Government would be having them high on the list of the people we need to go and support. But it is the job of the government. Australian citizens, wherever they are through our consular services, get that support. We will be doing our best to support them in whichever way we can.

Now, are we going to go to Tom, and then we'll go right over the back there. I will try and make sure everyone gets a go.

JOURNALIST: You have spoken before about making sure people get the right information, not - you know, information that is incorrect on social media. Given that, and a lot of older Australians get traditional newspapers and are at risk, would newsagents be considered an essential service through whatever stages of lockdown we're going to talk about?

PRIME MINISTER: First of all, no Premier or Chief Minister is speaking about the term that you have. Shopping centres, well more specifically I should say supermarkets, food, all the things that Australians are going to need - well, they are going to continue to be able to access those in the normal way. So, I would caution against the way people talk about this word "lockdown", and the reason I'd say it is this. And I know it's, you meant it innocently. I don't want to give people - and none of the Premiers do - that that is going to be someplace we might get to, where people can't go out and get essential supplies, that they can't get the things that they need to actually live life for the next 6 months. So, when we talk about potential other restrictions, there is no need for people to rush out and cram supermarkets and do things like that, because of other restrictions that may become necessary. So, I would actually caution the media against using the word "lockdown", because I think it does create unnecessary anxiety because that is not an arrangement that is actually being considered in the way that term might suggest.

But in terms of news information, well, what we have been doing is identifying activities that are undertaken at premises that we would be restricting. And so we have been nominating things that should cease. We haven't been going down the path of saying, "Well, this is all in. And everything else is out." It is actually focused on the things that we would restrict. Now, the reason we're doing that is because that's much easier to understand. Even barre classes, the other night, I now know what they are, by the way you will be pleased to know! All the memes that people have put together - it's barre is it? I will get the pronunciation, thank you, Sam Maiden!

JOURNALIST: [Inaudible]

PRIME MINISTER: That's one press conference I will remember, Sam! But barre, or whatever it is, by being specific about what is being restricted, that is a much more helpful way because then people know and they don't have to ask questions, "Well, is this in? Is that in? Is this in?" We are trying to be as clear as we can about what is being restricted. And we are looking to keep, as I said before, every service open that we possibly can. And they of course are important services, Tom. They are important services.

Now I promised I think to go over the back, right up, yep?

JOURNALIST: You thanked Australians for their cooperation with this and you've cited the progress of the last week, you obviously don't want to use the term lockdown, but New South Wales and Victoria are suggesting stricter measures, are you confident with the trajectory that we are seeing now in terms of people adhering to these measures, that that is enough to ensure that we won't have to enforce stricter measures?

PRIME MINISTER: No I don't think we can say that absolutely. I think where further restrictions are necessary, further restrictions will be applied. That is the approach we are taking. Today as we have met, we believe what we are doing today to target in on this most particular area of risk is what is necessary for today, but what I would flag is going forward, is that states and territories are getting in different phases of where the virus is at, and that you may see in the future, greater variation in how far restrictions go in some parts of the country, versus others, and I would encourage those where greater restrictions are not imposed, that is not in any way a suggestion that those jurisdictions are taking this any less seriously, it is just saying that where they are at, the restrictions are relevant for where they are, and other jurisdictions may be in a different situation. And so we are looking to build in that flexibility going forward because as Doctor Murphy keeps saying, you start this with this restriction, and then you have got to be able to do it for 6 months, and even, frankly, if we were to go to further restrictions, and say that they might be done for two or four weeks and reviewed after that time, you had better be ready to do it for 6 months, because at what point do you pull it back? And I think with what we're learning about the virus, that would present very challenging. Let's hope that that would not be required, but the reality is I think if we are being really brutally honest, is that once these restrictions come into place, they stay in place, and they will be in place for some time, and we will all have to keep adapting, and as I said this week, the way people adapted gives me great encouragement. John?

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, you mentioned as part of this business hibernation that both banks and also things like energy companies and landlords will have to spread and share some of the pain, what about employee benefits such as accumulated leave, long service leave, that might have accrued over many years, to perhaps get a business back on its feet, not to have its debts on those balance sheets? Could they be on the table as part of the discussion?

PRIME MINISTER: What the Treasurer and I are seeking to do is keep people connected to their business through this time and what we are seeking to do is ensure that in these businesses, everybody is part of it, everybody is a team member in this, it is and everybody's interest that that business resuscitates and rises again on the other side. That means your job is there again, your income is there again, life can return to some form of normality on the other side. So what I am saying is, we are all in it together. We are all in it, whether you are the landlord, whether you're the lessee, the employee, whether you are the bank, you are all in it. The energy companies, they have already moved, I think, I know they have, Angus Taylor has told me, they're looking to provide more support, whether you're the local government, all of these things. I mean, it's time for Australians in these commercial arrangements to sort of get it, that they have to sit down and come to an arrangement with one another. I mean, for example, if a tenant, a shop in a local high street somewhere in the country cannot keep their shop open and they have to put the lock on the door, they can't pay the rent, if the landlord wanted to enforce that on them and kick them out and rip their fitout out and do all that sort of thing, who do they think is going to move into the shop and pay the rent? I mean, what is sensible here is to understand the economic environment we are in and to see that on the other side, it is in everybody's interest that everybody gets through. So that is what working together, I think, in our

economy really means. So we want landlords to talk to their tenants, we want employees to talk to their employers, we want banks to talk to their customers and vice-versa, and we want them to sort out arrangements that help them or get through.

JOURNALIST: On the issue of residential rents, was there any conversation or was there any appetite to nationalise some of those restrictions or rules given that some states have already come out in front and given amnesties to some of the renters that we see? Was there any mood to make those rules nationalised?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, they can't be nationalised under a federal jurisdiction, these things will always remain the province of the states under the Constitution, but there is a lot of work being done together to try and get a consistent approach when it comes to residential tenancies. Residential tenancies are a bit different to commercial tenancies, there are different landlords, there are different issues in place. We are looking, the Commonwealth provides rental assistance and more and more people are coming onto rental assistance, for the simple fact that they have lost employment, they are coming onto the jobseeker payment which gives them entitlement to rental assistance, and so there will be a lot of supports that come into that. But it is an issue that is a high priority, just like childcare and they're complicated issues in many respects and we have to work through them to get the right answers, but it is high up on the list of. The Treasurers of all the states and territories, working under our Treasurer leading the process, is looking at exactly what you are talking about right now. Yep? I can do one more over here.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, the AMA today has raised concerns about protecting Australia's supply of PPE and other medical equipment, and with these reports that they are being exported or taken out of the country. Are you aware of this being an ongoing issue and you flagged it earlier in the week that there might be measures being put in place? How far away are those and, if I may, Professor Murphy, in April when all of the elective surgery nurses in private hospitals are no longer going to be doing that role, is there capacity to shift them potentially into ICU, or what is potentially happening with that workforce?

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: We have advanced plans with the states and territories, working with the private hospitals to absolutely keep those incredibly valuable clinicians. 35 percent of our intensive care is in our private hospital sector. They provide huge capacity, so they will have a key role in our outbreak, and we understand there are financial issues with elective surgery being reduced because of the PPE issue but we are absolutely omitted, state and territory and Commonwealth government, to make sure that we keep the private hospital sector viable to help in this response and to be there at the other end.

PRIME MINISTER: On the other issue, those regulations are coming into place literally as we speak. My hope is that will ensure through the ABF and all those authorities that they're able to crack down on this. It is very disappointing, to say the least, and there will be some people who just don't get it and do these sorts of things, and we have toughened up the laws to make sure that they will get it.

JOURNALIST: On intensive care, where are we up to with increasing capacity? The Journal of Australia says we may be 10 days away from hitting capacity around the country?

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: I think that prediction is not necessarily shared but we obviously have done very advanced work in increasing our intensive care capacity. So we have strategies to at least triple our intensive care capacity and even go further if we need to. We are working very closely with the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society, they are preparing a national heat map of where the beds are, where the usage of those beds are, and we are working very hard to increase our

supply of ventilators and consumables. We are, compared to many countries, our baseline ICU capacity is very good, much better per head of population and many other high income countries, but we have a very, very committed and enthusiastic intensive care community who are planning on very significant surges which we hope will not have to happen.

JOURNALIST: Many have suggested that more comprehensive restrictions would result in a shorter disruption and fewer deaths. Now, we know you don't agree with that, but are you willing to release the modelling that explains what the government, what the government thinks would happen under each scenario?

PRIME MINISTER: The decisions that I communicate from this podium are the decisions of all Premiers, Chief Ministers, and myself. This is not some personal view of mine, these are the decisions of the National Cabinet based on the medical expert advice that we receive in terms of the restrictions that are necessary to deal with the management of the outbreak of the virus in Australia. I sometimes note that those who often are pushing for greater restrictions, they will keep their job. I am not going to be so cavalier about it. I am going to make sure I fight for every job I can because I know that that job means something very important to that person, and that family. And I would not compromise that principle, save only that there would be a compelling health reason to do so.

So, Australia, thank you again. Thank you for what you have done. We will continue to do everything within our power to support you. This weekend, I hope you have a good one, it is going to be quite different to the ones you have had in the past, I know, but I also know that you will support one another and you will continue doing the things that you have been doing this week to save lives and to save livelihoods. Thank you.

PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA
The Hon Scott Morrison MP