

## MEDIA RELEASE

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Prime Minister  
E&OE



**PRIME MINISTER:** There is a way through this. We all need to keep going. I need all of you to keep going. And we're going to keep going to keep Australia running. All Australians have a role to play as we make our way through. And there is a way through. There is a bridge over this. And if we continue to work together in the way we are, all around the country, then Australia will bounce back strongly, you will bounce back strongly, your family, your business, your community. There is a way through.

Life is continuing to change. And together we're going to have to continue to adapt to those changes to keep Australia running. Australians, we will all continue to see more information. There will be additional cases. This is something we should be continuing to expect. This is anticipated. The presence of additional cases is not something of itself that should cause alarm, because at the end of the day, you don't stop this virus, but you can defeat it by slowing it down. And that is how we save lives. Today, the National Cabinet met again on our commitment to work together to keep Australians healthy as we can, to protect them, and to ensure that we keep Australia running together. Today, we made further decisions, many of which we've had flagged from our last meeting, that are both scalable and sustainable to ensure that we can continue to implement for the many months ahead. As I've said we're looking at at least six months to be working through over the course of this year. Of course, it could be longer. No one really knows, but we're taking decisions on the basis that we need to move at least through the next six months. At today's meeting, we began with this focusing on the the economic issues and with the presentation of the Reserve Bank Governor, Dr. Lowe, who briefed Premiers and Chief Ministers and myself on the measures that were announced yesterday, as well as providing a general overview of how the Reserve Bank was seeing the economy and the impacts. And this was also done by the federal Treasury through Dr. Kennedy, who provided the same advice.

We were able to share information between states and territories on what we're each doing to provide support in our economies, the various stimulus initiatives that have already been announced and further work we were doing together to ensure that we could provide further support. Now, as you know, as I said here with the Treasurer yesterday, we are working on a package that will cushion the blow over the next six months and will provide the necessary support so people can get on that bridge to get them to the other side. That is focusing heavily on small, medium sized businesses, sole traders, and it is also providing for the income support that will be necessary for those most directly impacted by the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus. I want to particularly welcome the decision which the Treasurer will go into in more detail that was made by the banks today, which showed that they are pulling together with everyone else to ensure that we can get Australians through this. These are important decisions that will provide real and genuine relief. It's a great start and we will continue to work closely with the banks and all others to ensure we all work together to provide the most support to Australians as we can to get them through this over the next six months at least. States also agreed today, and further work will be done on this, are working to identify how relief can be provided for tenants in both commercial tenancies and residential tenancies to ensure that in hardship conditions there will be relief that will be available and ensuring the tenancy legislation is protecting those tenants over the next six months at least. That work will be done by states and territories as it is a state and territory matter, and that

work will be led by Western Australia, together with New South Wales, working with all the other states and territories to bring back some model rules that can be applied in hardship cases. So understanding what the trigger might be and how in those circumstances that tenants would be able to maintain their tenancies. Now I know that will mean something for landlords, just as the decision taken today means something for banks, just like the decisions we have already taken as a Commonwealth Government means things for our balance sheets and as a people for the Commonwealth Government as it does for the states. It will also mean something for those, who sadly, might be stood down from their employment and have to look at their annual leave arrangements and sick leave arrangements. All Australians are going to be making sacrifices obviously, in the months ahead, and everyone does have that role to play and that will include landlords, at the end of the day for people who are enduring real hardship.

It was also agreed today that putting Budgets together at this time with the great uncertainty that exists is not something that any Commonwealth or State Government should be doing. As a result, we've already decided that we will not be now handing down a Budget until the first Tuesday in October, on the 6th of October. The Treasurer will be having a bit more to say about that. All other states and territories will be working to similar timetables. The idea that you can actually put together any sort of forecasts around the economy at this time is simply not sensible. And as a result, we will be putting in place the necessary measures with the support of the Parliament on supply and other continuances to ensure the proper functioning of government services and the continuation of vital programs. On Sunday, I will be meeting with the Leader of the Opposition and the leaderships of both the Government and the Opposition. I spoke to him earlier about this today and we'll be working through those practical issues around the functioning of the Parliament, both now and over the next six months. And I think the Leader of the Opposition for his support on those arrangements as we work them through.

On health, and I ask you to bear with me as we go through this, and Dr. Murphy will be joining us to answer questions, also make some statements on these matters. The rise in the number of cases means we need to continue to take action to suppress the growth in these cases and to flatten the curve, which is something more Australians are becoming more familiar with. That means we've got to work even harder to keep a healthy distance between us all. We agreed to further rules today regarding indoor non-essential gatherings. Earlier, I announced the 100 limit on non-essential indoor gatherings and I went through the list of those things that were essential. I won't do that again today. It's the same list. But what we are now moving to is an arrangement for gatherings of less than 100, is that there would be 4 square meters provided per person in an enclosed space in a room. So that's 2 meters by 2 meters. So for example, if you've got a room, you've got premise, if you've got a meeting room or something like that, that's 100 square meters then you can have 25 people in that room. Now in addition to that, you should continue to practice wherever possible the meter, meter and a half of healthy distance between each of us to ensure that we are limiting the contact and limiting the potential for the spread of the virus. Now these are quite practical rules. Out there in the community, whether it's licencing laws or fire laws or anything like this, there are already these types of arrangements. The number of people who can be in outdoors seated areas that relates to noise controls. So these I think are very practical and sensible arrangements that venues and others and commercial premises and in public premises that we can manage. It just simply means understanding how big the room is and then simply advising how many people can be in that room at any one time. And we'd also be seeking the cooperation of patrons and others to ensure that they can do the same thing. If you're looking after your behaviour, you're saving lives. You're helping other people who are more vulnerable. In many cases for the young and the healthy, it is true that the majority of cases, 8 out of 10 people only have a mild illness. But if younger people in particular, and those more generally in the community follows these rules, it won't be all life saving because you'll be fine, you'll be healthy. But by you doing the right thing, you'll be saving the life of someone who is more vulnerable. So do it for your fellow Australians. I know these rules will take some time for people to get used to, but I'd ask people to move as quickly as they can. I know it means a lot of change for a lot of venues, whether they be cafes or restaurants or clubs or any of these other places of public gathering, including in this building here. We'll be working to ensure that people know how many people can be

in the various meeting rooms in this place. Next week, the Parliament will have less than 100 people in it at any one time in the Chamber. So even in essential areas, it is practical to try and observe these, but that won't always be possible for... essential gatherings - they have an even higher purpose and in some cases that will be more difficult to implement. But if we do it more broadly, then we're slowing the rate and we are saving lives. I also want to make the point that self-isolation means self-isolation, and Dr. Murphy will be speaking more about that issue. We are hearing reports of some who are saying they're in self isolation and they're out and about. Self-isolation means exactly that. For older residents also, earlier this week, we also provided the advice through the AHPPC, through the medical experts panel, that older residents should be refraining more from public contact than others in the community. That doesn't mean they need to self-isolate. It just means that they should practise greater caution than those else otherwise in the population. Now on travel, there'll be further discussion about travel issues before the school holidays. The National Cabinet is now meeting every Tuesday night and every Friday morning. That's what we've done this week and we think that's a good rhythm of meetings to ensure we can consider all the recommendations that are coming up through our various agencies. The advice is to reconsider the need for unnecessary travel. And if you're unwell, stay at home, unless seeking medical advice. Further advice has been taken to the National Cabinet next Tuesday night, and that will be available before people go on school holidays. And so we'll be considering those issues further, and I'm just flagging that for next week when we consider those issues on a broader scale.

In relation to schools and preschools, the situation has not changed. It is in the national interest to ensure that we keep schools open. I want to thank all of those schools who have been putting those arrangements in place. For those schools who have moved to distance learning for their students, I want to thank those schools who have ensured that even in those circumstances, they have arranged for students of parents who have essential responsibilities, they may be nurses or doctors, child care workers, they may be teachers themselves. They are providing for the students to be able to continue to receive lessons in that facility, and that is what we want to see happen.

On aged care, the Government, the Commonwealth Government, made a number of decisions yesterday and to further support the workforce in aged care. We are providing \$444.6 million. I'll say that again, we're providing \$444.6 million of additional funding from the Commonwealth to support aged care facilities. Now, that is on top of the more than \$100 million that I announced last week in relation to workforce support across the country for aged care. That includes \$234.9 million for a retention bonus to ensure the continuity of the workforce for staff in both residential and home care. There's \$78.3 in additional funding for residential care to support continuity of works or supply. There is \$26.9 million to supplement the viability of residential aged care facilities, including in the national Torres Strait Islander aged care program, and the multi-purpose services and homeless providers. There's \$92.2 million being provided in additional support for home care providers and organisations which delivered the Commonwealth home support program, including for services such as Meals on Wheels and \$12.3 million to support the My Aged Care Service to respond to the needs of older Australians. National Cabinet agreed that states and territories will also issue nationally consistent public health directions on visitor restrictions for aged care facilities to complement the regulatory standards adopted by the Commonwealth. This additional funding is being focussed on those who are most vulnerable, to get them the additional support so they can get access to the essential things they need, particularly through things like Meals on Wheels and home care support and the other things older Australians will need going through this time.

Another very significant issue, which I flagged earlier in the week that we've been considering is in relation to remote Indigenous Australian areas. Under Biosecurity Act, we'll be using the Health Minister's powers to ensure that we've taken action to restrict travel into remote Indigenous communities to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The way this will work is states and territories will nominate prescribed areas, that is communities in consultation with Indigenous communities as an emergency requirement as determined under BioSecurity Act that will restrict persons from entering or leaving those prescribed areas. Now there will be a number of exemptions that will apply for the purposes of obtaining medical care or medical supplies into those communities, in the

event of an emergency, including the purposes of providing medical care. That would include things like medivac, of cases or others who are seriously ill from those communities, for the purposes of applying or undertaking critical services, such as medical care for mental health or domestic violence support, police and emergency services, food and medical supplies, educational and maintenance and repairs of essential services. And there are a range of other measures there which are done at the discretion also of the relevant exempting authority in those states and territories. So that will be a further important set of measures, and I particularly want to commend Minister Wyatt and Chief Minister Gunner up in the Northern Territory, working together. They've done an outstanding job and working through those issues, consulting with Indigenous leaders where they can, but you'd understand, given the urgency of this issue, that that consultation has had to be quite short circuited. Now, I think people like Pat Turner and others who've been very helpful in working with Ministers to come to these appropriate arrangements.

As you can see, again another long list of issues discussed today. There are also issues discussed relating to prison populations, as well as coordinating action in relation to supermarket supplies, food chains and supply chains across the community. And that is everything from a consistency of tracking laws to enable deliveries at any time of the day. I appreciate all the states and territories moving on those issues, on trading hours arrangements, and again, the states being very constructive when it comes to those matters.

What's next? Where do we go next? What are we considering? Well as I said on Tuesday night, we'll be considering further decisions on travel advice prior to the school holidays and there'll be further advice on managing critical hospital resources - an enormous amount of work has been done there. There is work we've tasked to the medical expert panel about what we would call localised responses. Now bear with me as I just make this point. There will be, as we have already seen, parts of cities or places that will be more susceptible because of quite localised outbreaks. What we've asked for advice on is the density of those cases, how many cases in a particular area that triggers actions over and above what these general rules are that apply to those areas, and that would be staged up according to the level of that outbreak and what needs to be done wherever possible to shut that down. Now, the reason I say that is we need a consistent approach to how this would scale up in the event of outbreaks in particular parts of particular areas, because that means just because you might see under those rules something being done in Tuggeranong or in Tamarama, or anywhere else, that doesn't mean those rules need to necessarily apply in Gymea Bay or down in Hawthorne or anywhere else. Where there are more specific outbreaks, there will be more advanced measures that would need to be put in place. And we want a clear set of rules across the country to support states and territories to make those rules and that advice will be coming forward on Tuesday evening. We'll also be considering the needs of other vulnerable groups. We've been focussed on aged care and remote Indigenous populations, but the Minister for the NDIS has been doing an extraordinary amount of work with the disability community and we're expecting further work to come forward on that, as well as more general discussions about maintaining continuity of supply and essential services in areas like telecommunications and energy and so on. But I must say at this point, the reports and advice that I've been receiving on these issues is at a reasonable level. And better than that, I'd have to say. But as time goes on, we'll keep a close watch on that. So I thank you for your patience again. I'm gonna pass you over to the Treasurer to make some comments on the measures put in place by the banks and then Brendan, Dr. Murphy, will speak on the matters I've raised and they're happy to take questions and I'll get round everybody as best as possible.

**THE HON JOSH FRYDENBERG MP, TREASURER:** Well, thank you, Prime Minister.

Yesterday, the Reserve Bank and the Australian Government injected \$105 billion of new funding into our financial system in a move that Standard & Poor's described as decisive and coordinated action. The Australian people can be reassured that our financial system remains strong and our actions have made the system even stronger.

Today, the Australian banks have stepped up to the plate and are playing their part in Team Australia. Their decision to defer payments by small businesses for six months will be a substantial boost to confidence and the spirit of millions of Australian small businesses. It's a game changer and it's part of our efforts with industry, with the states to build a bridge to the recovery, to the time after the global pandemic, the coronavirus, has hit. We have also seen a need to make some changes around regulation of lending to business. And we'll be cutting some red tape because it's critical that businesses not just have access to capital, but the speed at which that capital is delivered by the banks is as fast as possible.

Finally, the Prime Minister referred to a new date for the Budget. Forecasting for Budgets is difficult at the best of times, let alone when we're in the midst of a global pandemic. And I understand the states are making similar arrangements and it's important that we are able to deliver a Budget at a time where there is more certainty about the economic environment and that is planned for the first Tuesday in October.

**PRIME MINISTER:** Thank you, Josh. Congratulations on the work you've done with the banks. They've worked closely with you. And I appreciate your rather determined approach to ensure the outcome. And I think the banks also for stepping up. Brendan?

**PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER:** Thanks very much, Prime Minister.

So as the Prime Minister said, we've seen significant further growth in cases of coronavirus in Australia. We expected to see that. That's why we've been taking and announcing measures over the last week. And before that, it's important to note that we are still seeing a large number of imported cases from other countries. We've now stopped foreign nationals coming into the country, but there are still a lot of Australians coming home, some of them coming from countries with a high risk and outbreaks that we think are probably higher than reported and a high risk of importing the virus into the country, as we have seen in the last few days in every state, pretty much, in this country. So this issue of quarantining when you come home is serious. This is not an advisory. This is your civic duty to your fellow Australians to stay home for that entire 14 days if you've come back to Australia, no exceptions. And if you see anyone who is not abiding by that, a recent traveller, make sure they do, because we are really serious about that. Is it such a big impact on our outbreaks in the last few days? But we have also seen community outbreaks in a number of states. Again, we expected them. That's why we put in the social distancing measures first announced late last week and progressively further announced this week. They are expected to start hitting in about a week, a week after they were first announced. We always expected a bit of a delay. But as the Prime Minister's announced, we have to make sure that people are very clear about what they mean. What we mean is that you should be distancing yourself from every fellow Australian where possible. That's why we have guidelines for people in gatherings of less than 100. It's no point having a gathering of 20 people if it's in a tiny room and you're all together, you've got to practise social distancing. Keep that metre and a half away from each other. Practise good hand hygiene all the time and stay away from work or the community if you're unwell. This is also incredibly important. Whilst people who are high risk of contacts and return travellers if they get symptoms must be tested there will be cases of community contact where it's not suspected and they might just get a sniffle or a cold. The sort of thing that many of us have soldiered through and gone to work in recent years. We can't do that anymore. Nobody should be going to work or mixing with society or friends or going out if they're unwell at all. Stay at home if you're unwell, only go out when you're feeling well. Go to work when you're feeling well. Practise good hand hygiene and practise that social distancing at all times.

This is critical now, we have to slow the curve, as the Prime Minister said. We are well prepared. We've had very few deaths so far, they're tragic, and we've had very few people in intensive care. But there is there's a risk that if we don't do what every one of us has to do as our civic duty to control this spread it will grow significantly greater. Thanks, Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:** Thank you Brendan, remain there, if you would mind. David?

**JOURNALIST:** Prime Minister there are, [inaudible] Australians who are very worried about their job, and have to face the prospect of being unemployed, what's your position on whether you could increase the Newstart allowance by something like \$95 which is what some people have called for? But also really to make it easier for people to get it, because there will be so many people who won't have navigated the Centrelink system before, can it be easier for them to get it? Can it be increased? And can the mutual obligation requirements be waived?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, David, these are exactly the issues that the Expenditure Review Committee, together with the Treasurer and I, that we have been addressing in a great amount of detail as we've worked through those. And indeed, we'll be meeting again this afternoon, be putting the final touches on the package of measures that are designed to provide, to cushion the blow for exactly the blow that you're talking about.

There will be Australians over the next six months who, through no fault of their own, will find themselves with less work, with less income. And in the worst case, without a job, that is that is going to happen. And that's going to happen to quite a number of people. And it's our job to ensure that we do as much as we possibly can to cushion that blow and to put the other arrangements in place, like what has happened today with banks and others and what we'll seek to do working through the states and territories for landlords and so on, to ensure that we can provide that support to people through these difficult next six months, through this transitional period, through this temporary period. And I can assure you, David, we are giving very close attention to the very things you're talking about, because it will be a difficult time. People who have never known themselves to be out of work will be confronted in some cases with that prospect. And we want to make sure that we can help them as best as we can through what will be a difficult period for them and their family.

Chris?

**JOURNALIST:** PM there's the Ruby Princess off the coast of New South Wales at the moment. It had confirmed cases of coronavirus, it let some people off in Sydney. This is the same liner that had the Diamond Princess experience before. So a couple of questions. What are the plans? What do you do with the Ruby Princess? Is there anything that we can do about this company? Has it behaved in an irrational way in continuing to run cruises? And of course, we, like you, are hearing stories from Australians who are now around the world demanding that the Australian government get them home. What's your message to those?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, first of all, I mean, we will apply the same rules in relation to this vessel that have been applied to people getting off planes and things like this. There's the 14 day isolation. There are a small number of cases, my advice is, that were identified on that ship, four I understand. Three individuals and one crew, where there are Australians on that ship were disembarking well they will be going into self isolation, which means self isolation. Just do it. Would be my message on that, to support what the Chief Medical Officer is saying and those who are internationals will face different rules.

So we have got the international ban now coming into place around the country in relation to cruise vessels, and that will be enforced. In relation to those Australians who are in other places, as I said earlier this week, Qantas will continue to be maintaining flights out of a number of key hubs - and that's Los Angeles, and London, and Hong Kong I understand, and Auckland and a few other places around the world. And we thank them for continuing to do that. And we are encouraging Australians to make their way home. Air New Zealand I understand, will continue to operate and the arrangement that Prime Minister Ardern and I came to yesterday means that Australians can transit through Auckland from other places and across to Australia, and likewise Kiwis can make their way home through Australia on the same basis. So we will just continue to respond to each challenge as it comes is my response.

We have a good framework for dealing with it, a clear set of rules and we'll seek to apply them. There'll be some exceptional circumstances and cases here and there, but for those Australians who are finding themselves isolated in parts of the world, well the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, I'm particularly aware of the issue that was raised with me yesterday around Lima, where there are Australians who are in places

which have already been cut off and you can't get a flight up to L.A.X. or something like that, then the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Foreign Minister are bringing forward some matters for consideration by the National Security Committee.

We'll just go around, so I'll go to Phil and then I'll come back here and then over to you Mark, we'll get around to everybody.

**JOURNALIST:** You're sort of flagged further restrictions if you like on travel pending the school holidays. Should people who have flights booked, domestic flights booked now start seeking refunds in anticipation of what you might announce next week? And just sorry, if I may. Secondly, on the potential lockdown of some neighbourhoods and so forth that you flagged, would that be confining people to their homes, closing businesses, that sort of thing?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, let me deal with the first one. If there were further advice for me to provide on travel today based on the National Cabinet, I would have certainly done that. We are saying that people should reconsider any unnecessary travel. That's what, that is the clear advice. And that comes also with the backing of the medical experts panel but we will consider further advice on that and we know that is necessary in, to do so in time for the school holidays. And we agreed today that we need to do a bit more work on that and we'll be getting that back on Tuesday.

I should stress a couple of things around travel, as I did earlier in the week, as Dr. Murphy has said, the risk of being on a plane is very low. It is very low. The issue is not being on the plane, the issue is moving to different parts of the country and potentially large volumes of populations moving around the country. Now, states and territories are, as you've seen, the, Tasmania has already made their decision about how that will be treated. Other states may take those decisions for particular parts of their states, and that is entirely appropriate that they may consider doing that. And that's why as we work through some of those issues, we'll have further advice after the meeting on Tuesday night.

**JOURNALIST:** Just on schools, a year 8 student in Adelaide got the virus from a teacher. How can you leave schools open when this sort of transmission is occurring? And what's your concern- what's your response to concerns from teachers, particularly, 40 per cent of which are over 50, that their well-being maybe isn't being considered?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, I might let the Chief Medical Officer respond to that question. But in terms of the decision of Premiers, Chief Ministers and myself in taking that advice, that outcome that you mentioned with a single transference, that would not be unexpected when you've got the number of cases increasing. But it still remains the case that the facts are that the incidence of cases amongst younger people is much lower than for the rest of the population. And it is still very much the case that 30 per cent of our health workforce would be compromised if schools were to be shut around the country. Now, we will continue to take advice and we'll continue to monitor the situation closely. But the very clear decision of premiers, chief ministers and myself is that schools should remain open. Did you want to add to that, Brendan?

**PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER:** So I think it's really important to recognise that, as we said before, we think the risks to children with this virus is very low. Only 2.4 per cent of all the cases in China in Hubei Province were under 19. And there have been very, very, very few significant cases. Obviously, we do have some concerns that children may have a role in transmission, but most children who get the virus seem to have got it from adults, as you've seen in this case. We think that keeping children at home when there's relatively low community spread is probably disproportionate, given that they probably won't stay at home anyway. They may be cared for by elderly grandparents. There may be circumstances where outbreaks in an area are such that we do need to close schools for a period of time. Our view at the moment that this long haul strategy for the next six months, it is in the best interests of everybody to keep schools open and we think that risk is proportionate.

**PRIME MINISTER:** I think Mark was next.

**JOURNALIST:** Dr. Murphy, can I just ask you, and I have a second question, a few cheeky one. But Dr Murphy, what is the latest advice on whether once you've recovered from COVID-19 that you can contract it again and my second question is you talk about indigenous communities being particularly susceptible. What arrangements, if any, are being made in Alice Springs where you do have a particular arrangement with the Americans where they can, Americans can fly in without quarantine or customs to service Pine Gap? What are we doing there? Are we expecting more of the Americans, given that the United States has been a big cause of infection around the world?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Let me deal with the second question - no, is the short answer to that question. The rules we are applying, we are applying across the board. But in terms of going into more detail about that facility, you wouldn't expect me to do that. Brendan?

**PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER:** So in terms of re-infection, we can't be absolutely sure, but we think it's very unlikely. There have been a couple of cases of people who have supposedly tested negative and then tested positive, been reported around the world, including one in Japan. But they are very isolated cases. We think it's unlikely that a virus like this that isn't mutating a lot, you would be susceptible to re-infection. But we don't know for sure. Our assumption is that once people have had the infection, that it's unlikely they will get it again.

**JOURNALIST:** What is sort of a tenants relief are you looking at? Would it be rent deferrals? Would it only apply to people who lose their jobs or the businesses are in distress? And when you want the states to have a decision on this, so it can be enacted?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, I'm not going to go into too much detail there because the states are only just commencing the work. New South Wales has been doing already quite a bit of work on this and so I'm going to allow them appropriately to take the lead on that and to define, I think, a lot of the issues you're sitting out there, Mark, and in what circumstances, what would be the hardship triggers? Would this relate to waivers or deferrals? Would it relate to deductions or there are a range of different issues, remembering also that those who become eligible, I should note, this sort of I think goes to a point I think one of you were asking, I think it was you, David, that in those circumstances you would also trigger if you were to go on a Newstart payment or this jobseeker payment, that you also trigger eligibility for a range of other things like the family tax benefit for rental assistance and things like this. So it's not just the Newstart payment, as important as that would be, it is also a range of other payments that you become eligible for. Even if under the Newstart taper rates, your eligibility for the actual Newstart payment is relatively low. You still trigger all the other eligibility to a range of other payments, which can be quite helpful. Michelle, Michelle and then I will keep going.

**JOURNALIST:** There's been speculation running that the government might be willing to take over, to nationalise large companies if the crisis reaches that point, like Virgin for example. What's your comment on that?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, we have no plans along those lines, Michelle. I mean, what we are seeking to do and in a number of cases where we've provided great assistance to private companies to support important supply production in Australia, it is essential. And the Minister for Industry, Karen Andrews, has just been doing an outstanding job and in progressing a number of those issues. Those broader questions, Michelle, at this stage, there are no plans from the government. I wouldn't want that to be misinterpreted. I mean, we are in unprecedented times, but we have no plans to be involved in those sort of nationalisation programs. That is a response that is not justified by what we're seeing or anticipating at present. Kath? Make way, clear some healthy space.

**JOURNALIST:** Will workers be able to access their superannuation savings as an income support measure during this crisis?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Again, we'll be making further announcements on the next round of measures to cushion the blow for those who are directly impacted, whether they be small businesses or individuals soon. We continue to consider the composition of that package and when we're in a position to make those announcements, we will. Sorry, over here, we haven't had questions over here.

**JOURNALIST:** Dr. Murphy, do you mind if I ask a slightly personal question, you've been working on this coronavirus since January. Are you finding the pace of the job exhausting?

**PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER:** It is very intense, but it's such an important job to provide advice to our governments collectively. And all of the state's chief health officers, all of the experts we have have been very consistent and unanimous in their advice. So it's a cause that's worth pursuing, but it is pretty intense.

**PRIME MINISTER:** We're working hard to keep up with him, that's what we're doing. But also, I want to say this. I want to thank all of those members of the medical expert panel and Dr. Murphy and Dr. Kelly. There's been quite a lot of commentary about them, but by all means, have a crack at politicians. We're used to it, we've got broad shoulders. These guys have got a very important job to do and I would ask you to support them very strongly. We're relying on them so you can rely on the decisions we're making. The medical experts are giving us incredible advice, very timely. They're working very hard and they are carrying great responsibilities. They deserve our great respect and our support.

**JOURNALIST:** On the charity sector, so the charities and non-profit sector employs around 10 per cent of Australian workers at the moment. They're estimating that their donations and income streams are going to go down by about a third, which translates to potential job losses of around 300,000 people. Is your government going to be doing anything to support them, given that at the moment they're saying that they can't access business grants?

**PRIME MINISTER:** I understand. A job is a job and we're going to support people in jobs and if people find themselves out of work, regardless of where they've been working, then obviously we're seeking to support them. But we're taking a very broad view of the economy. I mean, these are not ordinary times. That means the ordinary rules and the ordinary measures that would apply in these circumstances will need to be changed to reflect that. And so that is very much in our thinking here.

**JOURNALIST:** Just to get a sense of the scale in terms of the indoor bans, this courtyard would be less than 100 metres long and it's certainly less than 100 metres wide. Are you saying if we put a roof over it, there are too many people in here at the moment?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Not right now, I wouldn't have thought, on quick maths, but this is an outdoor gathering, so 500 people could technically be here. But let me but let me say this. These are rules that we're putting in place, I think, to support people making good decisions and enforce appropriate healthy distancing, social distancing to slow the rate. But you have a role to play, too, as does everybody in how they congregate together and ensuring that appropriate distance is being maintained between people. Sure, governments have got to put rules in place and we want to see that enforcement in place. But equally, every Australian has a role to play to slow this virus. Don't wait to see a sign. Don't wait for any other specific instruction, do the right thing, do the common sense thing and support each other and you will save lives. Over here.

**JOURNALIST:** On the testing criteria, is there going to be any discussion around relaxing them? It's still a set of people overseas....

**PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER:** So we are looking actively at relaxing the testing criteria. We are now testing all aged care workers because aged care is such a crucial area. We will be testing healthcare workers with influenza like illnesses, all people presenting to hospital with pneumonia, in addition to the usual criteria of return travellers and contacts. And we will look at all, as this pandemic develops, we will be continually reviewing the testing criteria.

**PRIME MINISTER:** I'm going to leave it there because we have some other meetings to get to this afternoon. The key thing we're saying today is we're going to keep Australia running. There is a way through this and we need everybody to keep going forward. We need every single Australian to do what they can, whether they're a parent, whether they're a teacher, whether a nurse, whether a member of parliament, whether a journalist, whatever your job is or whatever you're doing. I need you to keep doing it as much as you

can, because if we keep doing it, if we keep holding together, then we will continue to make our way through this. We will get to the other side and on the other side, Australia will be stronger. Thank you all very much.