



**The Hon. Scott Morrison MP**  
Prime Minister

**TRANSCRIPT**  
**PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**SYDNEY, NSW**  
**SUNDAY 15 MARCH 2020**

EO&E...

**PRIME MINISTER:** Good afternoon everyone, today was an historic gathering and I welcome Dr Kelly as well to be with us here today, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

An historic gathering of the first ever National Cabinet, bringing together the Premiers and Chief Ministers of our States and Territories concurrently, together with myself as a part of the national response, the coordinated national response to the spread of the coronavirus here in Australia. The many things that we have to do to continue to contain the spread of the virus here in Australia, it goes across both federal and state governments. And so ensuring that we're working incredibly closely together, that we are highly aligned both in the information we're receiving, it's understanding the actions that we need to take is incredibly important as we implement the measures that will keep Australians safe into the future, and ensure that we come through this together.

It's always important to be extremely clear and up front with Australians, and that's certainly what we've sought to do as a government. I commend Dr Kelly and Dr Murphy, who have been doing an outstanding job in providing regular briefings to the Australian people about the issues in relation to the coronavirus and indeed their state and territory colleagues as well. They've been providing that information. As you know, the National Campaign, Public Information Campaign is out in newspapers and televisions and things today and social media has already been in place now for several days and we initiated. Several weeks ago, I announced that we were putting in place and activating the Australian health sector emergency response plan for the novel coronavirus COVID-19. We've commenced that plan with the initial phase and today the National Security Committee met before the National Cabinet, and we've moved now to the next phase, which is the target action stage. And there are major decisions that were taken today that reflect changing where we are heading. The facts and the science, the medical advice will continue to drive and support the decisions that we are making as a National Cabinet, as indeed as a federal Cabinet at the Commonwealth level. But the truth is that while many people will contract this virus that it's clear, just as people get the flu each year, it is a more severe condition than the flu, but for the vast majority, as I said last week, for the majority, around 8 in 10 is our advice, it will be a mild illness and it will pass. However, for older Australians and those that are more vulnerable, particularly those in remote communities and those with pre-existing health conditions, it is a far more serious virus, and that

is our concern. Our aim in all of this is to protect the most vulnerable. The most at risk. And I want to take you through again the decisions we're taking today and we have been taking.

We know that the virus cannot be absolutely stopped. Of course not. No one can do that. But we can slow the spread and we anticipate that will be what our task will be over about the next six months. No one can know for certain how long this will run. It could be shorter than that. It could be longer than that. But the measures that we're putting in place as a government is making those types of assumptions. But that is being updated on a daily basis.

Now what I have here, this is, there are a range of different scenarios that are pulled together by modellers around the country and none of them is a prediction, all of them just simply show the possible spread of the virus and what that could mean ultimately, when we work through things like ICU beds and ED presentations, and GP's and so on. If you don't take measures that seek to contain the spread, and mitigate the spread, then you have scenarios that look like this. You have scenarios where you get a very severe effect on the spread of the virus. You may move through it much more quickly, but what happens is the virus reaches more people, and that puts maximum pressure on your health system. And that obviously has far more drastic implications for the most vulnerable in our community.

Now the extent of that peak depends on the rate of transmission you might see in some countries where there's a much higher rate of transmission by any one person then the peak would be higher. And the impact will be more severe, but in other scenarios like this, it is still significant, but it can be less in terms of how many people it reaches. The job of our plan, the job of working together is what we call a flattening the peak, and to get this result as opposed to that result, what we're looking to do is manage the flow so we suppress the demand on our health systems and ensure that we can continue to provide the care that Australians need.

In this sort of scenario, which is what we're working to achieve, this means with some changes to the way that ICU departments are managed and things of that nature. The advice we've had to date and the excellent work that's being done by the chief medical officer working with the states and territories, means that that can be dealt with. That doesn't mean there won't be busy times in our hospitals. It doesn't mean there won't be stresses on the system and there won't be days where patience will be required, and there won't be frustrations. It's not what it means. What it means is, if we continue to manage the spread of how the virus impacts in Australia, then we will be able to ensure that we can continue to provide the services and support, particularly to the most vulnerable Australians who are most at risk from the Coronavirus. So slowing the spread, you free up the beds. That's what happens when you get this right and we've seen other countries going down this path. Australia has also been going down this path and the way we've been managing everything from travel bans to the way we've had quarantine arrangements in place and self-isolation, these arrangements have been ensuring that the number of cases we've had in Australia up until now, and they are growing now, they have been kept well below what we've been seeing in many other countries.

We have a first class health system here in Australia, but no hospital system on its own can deal with this at its most extreme position, whether that's in the United Kingdom or anywhere else. And last night, I had the opportunity to talk to Prime Minister Boris Johnson and we were talking through these very types of scenarios and and it was important for us to be swapping notes on those issues as I was with Prime Minister Arden yesterday, as we discussed the arrangements that she put in place yesterday in New Zealand. And indeed, we've been considering ourselves.

We're going to have to get used to some more changes in the way we live our lives over the next six months or so, there will be further intrusions. There will be further restrictions on people's movement and their behaviour. But the point is, you do it in a timely way. You do it in a managed way. You do it in a careful way. Just because something is not necessary today doesn't mean it won't be necessary in 3 weeks from now or 3 months from now, just as something we're announcing today wasn't necessary 2 months ago.

Today, as the rate of community transmission starts to pick up, then new measures are put in place. And what you simply do as I'm explaining, as you put these new measures in, as you see these curves unfolding, then you can flatten the curve as you move forward. Some places, schools, workplaces, others will make various decisions along the way. And they can work off the best advice that they have available. Australians are smart people, they're commonsense people. Occasionally, in recent weeks and months, we've seen some examples, not of that behaviour, and that's regrettable. But for the vast majority of Australians, they're commonsense people and we have to rely on their judgment as well. The government can't manage every hour of your life and tell you what to do every hour of the day, but we can't ask you to listen to the information and make your best judgments as you care for yourself and your family and those around you. We're relying on that Australian spirit of looking after each other, as we get through the difficult months that are ahead.

Today, I now want to move to the decisions that we have taken that were consistent with the plan that I've outlined to you. First of all, the National Security Committee met before the National Cabinet today and we resolved to do the following things; to help stay ahead of this curve we will impose a universal precautionary self-isolation requirement on all international arrivals to Australia, and that is effective from midnight tonight. Further, the Australian government will also ban cruise ships from foreign ports from arriving at Australian ports after an initial 30 days and that will go forward on a voluntary basis. The National Cabinet also endorsed the advice of the AHPPC today to further introduce social distancing measures. Before I moved to those, I just wanted to be clear about those travel restrictions that I've just announced. All people coming to Australia will be required, will be required I stress, to self isolate for 14 days. This is very important. What we've seen in recent, in the recent weeks is more countries having issues with the virus. And that means that the source of some of those transmissions are coming from more and more countries. Bans have been very effective to date. And what this measure will do is ensure that particularly Australians who are the majority of people coming to Australia now on these flights, when they come back to Australia, they're self-isolation for 14 days will do an effective job in flattening this curve as we go forward. Similarly, the arrangements for cruise ships will have the same effect in specific cases where we have Australians on cruise ships. Then there will be some bespoke arrangements that we put in place directly under the command of the Australian Border Force to ensure that the relevant protections are put in place. We're seeking to assist Australians to come home by ensuring that the flights continue to run, but when they come home, they'll be spending another 14 days in self isolation. And so I've covered also the issue of the cruises.

When it comes to social distancing I want to read to you the key sections of the advice that we've provided today to the National Cabinet. The AHPPC believes that social distancing measures are now required and will need to be introduced progressively to reduce disruption. This has the most benefit in delaying transmission. The AHPPC advises, as we flagged last Friday, that in general non-essential gatherings of more than 500 people should not occur. They also advise that at this early stage, not to prevent the operation of essential functions, including schools, universities and workplaces, or prevent the operation of public transport. However, the principle of social distancing should still apply in these settings. The AHPPC advises, is for static non-essential gatherings of persons that they should not go ahead, if there are

more than 500 people you'll be in such a gathering. Now what do I mean by that? A static gathering is when you're sitting as you are here in this room for prolonged periods. That would occur at a stadium, it would occur in a theatre, that would occur in events such as those where people are together in close proximity for a sustained period of time. The advice is that those gatherings should not continue at that scale. The AHPPC advises and Dr Kelly may wish to touch on this, but that includes how you can mitigate those events, when they are in much larger rooms that obviously reduces the risk. If the gathering is outdoors in much more open gatherings, well, obviously that reduces the risk.

There are a lot of common sense principles which should be fairly obvious, I think. And the way people respond to those I think will be very helpful. So what the National Cabinet has agreed today is that we will adopt that recommendation and we will be preventing non-essential static gatherings of more than 500 people occurring across the states and territories. The states and territories will be moving to put in place the appropriate arrangements under their state based legislation to ensure that is supported. They'll be doing the same thing in relation to the self-isolation requirements of Australians and others coming to this country by air to support the decision of the National Security Committee. Now that legislation is a matter for the states and territories. They'll be working on that promptly. But from here on in, from Monday, it's important that people act in accordance with that advice. Now, the obvious question is, how would that be enforced? Well, the states and territories wisely are not going to create event police or social distancing police or things of that nature. That would not be a wise use of police resources around the country. But the legislation impact would mean that if a person did fail to observe the 14 day self-isolation or if an event was organised, that would be contrary, once those provisions are put in place to state law, and there'd be nothing preventing I'm sure the states from ensuring that that was dated from Monday. But they will be specific details that the states will naturally work together on and ensure as much consistency as possible across their jurisdictions.

A few other things that were decided today, was about the priorities of what we must be addressing as a National Cabinet in the days and the weeks ahead, having addressed the issue of mass gatherings of 500 persons or more And let me be clear. That obviously doesn't mean, as I said on Friday, it doesn't mean train stations, it doesn't mean shopping centres. It doesn't even necessarily mean markets like Salamanca down in Hobart or things of that nature. These are static mass gatherings where people are together for long periods of time. For large events, very large events like the Royal Easter Show, which has already been here in New South Wales, cancelled, I mean that is an event which was cancelled, as the Premier reminded us this morning, to prevent people coming from all around the state into t Sydney and potentially being exposed to the virus through that type of an interaction and within the Easter Show you are together with large groups of people for long periods of time. So there will still need to be a lot of judgement exercised at a state and territory level in relation to specific events. That will include Anzac Day. We will be putting out specific guidelines working together with the RSL about those gatherings and particularly regarding the participation of more vulnerable Australians out of our more elderly veterans community. We had a long discussion about what the most important priority is now having made that decision about mass gatherings, the first of those is putting in arrangements and restrictions around the visiting of aged care facilities and the AHPPC is working on that today and they'll be providing us with further advice about how that will work. They are also doing work on remote communities, particularly that is going to affect the parts of South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland especially. And so they're doing some important work there about the arrangements and protocols that would need to be in place. They are also doing work on further restrictions on gatherings in enclosed spaces. And the National Cabinet will meet on Tuesday night and consider that advice so I can stand here before you on Wednesday and provide you with further announcements in terms of the further decisions that are made in relation to aged care and gatherings involving enclosed areas.

We also had some wide discussions today about schools, and I can totally understand, as a parent of two daughters in school here in Sydney, that people are naturally anxious about the issue of schools. As the British chief medical officer observed just over the last couple of days, the issue of wide-scale closure of schools, it might be anti-intuitive, but the advice is this could actually be a very negative thing in terms of impacting on how these curves operate. That happens for two reasons. When you take children out of schools and put them back in the broader community, the ability for them to potentially engage with others increases that risk. And that's the understanding we have. There's also issues of herd immunity that relate to children as well. And Dr. Kelly, might want to touch on those issues. The other issue is the disruption impact that can have and put at great risk the availability of critical workers such as nurses and doctors and others who are essential in the community because they would have to remain home and look after their children. And so while it may seem counter-intuitive, there is very good reason why you would not be moving to broad scale closures of schools that could actually make the situation worse, not better. And so the states and territories are not moving in that direction. We will consider this again further on Friday at our meeting, after Tuesday night, to consider further advice on those issues. So for now, the continuing practice, which is especially being put in place in New South Wales and Victoria, where they've had the most experience of this, individual decisions are made on particular schools based on the cases that are presented there and the circumstances that exist in those communities. And that is done in conjunction with their state health officers to make the right decisions in those very specific locations.

So with all of those matters, I think I've touched on all the decisions that we've made today as a National Cabinet and as a meeting of the National Security Committee, and we will continue to meet regularly. There was a very strong spirit of unity and cooperation. And again, I want to thank the premiers and the chief ministers for their support in bringing together this national cabinet. It has now been established formally under the Commonwealth government's cabinet guidelines. And it has the status of a meeting of Cabinet that would exist at a federal level, as does the meetings of the AHPPC and the national coordinating mechanism, which is feeding up into those arrangements.

So some important changes today. There will be more changes in the future. We'll be seeking to forecast those for you as much as possible. Remember, when we're taking these decisions, we're taking them to allow time for people to adopt them. These are not absolute measures that if they are introduced today then, if I were introduced the day before, that Australia was put at risk that's not the case. What we're doing is implementing the measures well in advance of where they might have otherwise been done. What we've seen overseas with some of the restrictions that you've seen in many of those other countries, they were introduced when the number of cases and the amount of spread in their communities was far more advanced than where we are in Australia today. And so what we're introducing today means we're getting well ahead of where those other countries have been when they've had far greater numbers of cases. So we'll continue to stay ahead of this. We'll continue to keep our heads when it comes to this. And we will continue to take the medical advice which will guide what is first and foremost a health crisis in this country.

One last point I should have made, is the states will also be considering moving their movement to public health emergency status under their various state arrangements. In some places like Queensland they've already moved to that some time ago. Now, the other states are now working over the next few days to make their own decisions on that. That is entirely a matter for those states and territories. And they'd be seeking to align how they do that over the next few days. And I think that's a productive thing they can do and ensure we're getting on a consistent footing. But with that, I'm gonna hand over to Dr. Kelly.

**DR. PAUL KELLY, DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER:** Thank you, Prime Minister. So that's a lot of information there. I won't give too much more, just to reiterate the Prime Minister's statement that what we are doing and as we've always been doing throughout this, as we've learnt more about the virus, how it spreads, the effect it has on people's health, and particularly the issues that are pertinent to Australia as distinct from other countries in the world. This is a proportionate response. And so what we are doing is the proportionate response, staged and informed by the information as it progresses. So things are changing on a daily basis. And as the Prime Minister has said, that doesn't mean that it was wrong yesterday. It was right for yesterday, today is a new day. And the next day will be another new day. We'll have more information and we'll be able to go forward. The Prime Minister has mentioned the modelling that is being done. It is continuing to be redefined and and be more accurate as it goes forward. But it is not, it's not the definite future it is to guide the decisions that are being made, that the graph that we see on the right hand side, your left, is the graph we see when there is a new virus entering our community where no one has immunity against that virus. That is the issue with this coronavirus. It's not like flu. It's not like any other viruses and diseases where we have vaccination. And that important issue of herd immunity that we talk about a lot in vaccination is exactly the challenge that we have at the moment. There is no herd immunity. Everyone is susceptible to this virus in Australia. And so that's why these unusual and proportionate measures that we are taking now to prevent the worst case scenario, which is that very high peak, is really important. And as we go through, there will be other measures that may need to be introduced depending on how things work out in the coming weeks or months.

What is different about Australia, of course, is that we're not yet in winter. All of the places where we're seeing this virus really escalate very quickly now through other parts of the world, are in the northern hemisphere. They're in the in the in the later part of the winter months, they have flu seasons as well. And all of the environmental elements that allow viruses to spread quickly are actually there in North America, in China, in other parts of northern Asia and across to Europe. We've seen exactly what has happened there, and in particular, not taking enough action, probably early enough in most of those countries. And we can see the effects on the healthcare system and the unfortunate death rates that we're seeing around the world. In Australia, we now have almost 250 cases. That doesn't sound like a lot. But if you think back just a week, that's quite a few more than we had last week. Next week we'll have more. At the moment it's mostly in relation to travel. And so those new restrictions and new measures that have been put at the border in terms of 14 days quarantine for everyone coming back from overseas, from whatever country is the next proportionate step to take to decrease those travel related illnesses. But we are also starting to see, particularly here in Sydney, but also in other other cities and into our regional areas, some human to human transmission in Australia, not necessarily related to travel. That will be the next step, more proportionate measures will need to be taken as that develops. So these are difficult times and the disruption to society is very much felt by us in the health side of government. But we are continuing to give our measured advice to government and we're very happy that that's being listened to and put it into account with the other measures in terms of social, economic and other considerations. So Prime Minister I might leave it there.

**PRIME MINISTER:** Thank you Dr. Kelly. And just on social distancing also, that means that the social distancing practices that we're encouraging are being expanded. So there's no more handshakes. That is a new move we've moved to, and that's something that I'll be practicing, my Cabinet members, that you expect to see leaders and others now practicing. This was not something that was necessarily a key requirement weeks ago, but it's just another step up now. It's a precautionary step. And we'll be practising that. The Cabinet itself will now be meeting more regularly by video, by video conferencing, rather than all Cabinet members being in one place that will apply to the national security committee, and National Cabinet, as it did today, met through video conferencing, similarly leaders and other politicians you can

expect to see not travelling as much as they were before. Not engaging as many public events. I've cancelled a number of events for next week. That is just simply to try and manage the normal process- as you'd expect, too, as we move into this next phase which we've agreed to do today. I'll be working particularly with the Speaker and the President of the Senate to look at the, they've already been working on that for some time, actually, about the arrangements we'll put in place, obviously consulting with the Leader of the opposition on those issues. We have important work to do when Parliament resumes on Monday week. We can focus on that and get that done in very practical arrangements to achieve that. Questions?

**JOURNALIST:** Prime Minister, how long will this travel, new travel arrangement last this ban?

**PRIME MINISTER:** It's indefinite. It's reviewed every week.

**JOURNALIST:** Explain to us how does it work? How do people self isolate? They come off, out of the airport. They get in a taxi they stay in a hotel room for two weeks? And an Australian goes home and stays in their bedroom for 2 weeks?

**PRIME MINISTER:** That's it. And Australian Border Force will be moving over the course of this weekend to ensure that people statutorily declare that if they're entering the country, that they understand that that is the requirement. What will happen, Chris, and this is what we've seen in other countries that have done this, is that the visitor traffic will dry up very, very, very quickly. And it's important that the flights keep going because they bring Australians home. I should also note that Pacific Islanders who are on their way home, to their home country, will be allowed to transit through Australia. They won't be allowed to remain in Australia, they're allowed to travel. Otherwise, they have no way of getting home and that's us being part of the Pacific family and helping them. New Zealand put exactly the same set of arrangements in place for Pacific Islanders coming home by New Zealand. The arrangements I've announced today are those that were put in place by New Zealand yesterday, and they in fact will come into effect at the same time.

**JOURNALIST:** Will there be a central database Prime Minister, that state authorities can access so they know who's been overseas. And if they should be self isolating, I just don't understand how it's going to be policed?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, again, I mean, this has been in place now for many months, for over a month now in terms of travellers coming from China and other places. And the truth is, the self-isolation has worked out in practice quite well because Australians have followed the instructions. And up until now, that has been a voluntary arrangement. There has been no potential sanction that might apply against a person for not following that requirement. Once state authorities are in a position to give that its legal enforcement then that will be a change. I mean, so if your mate has been Bali and they come back and they turn up at work, and they're sitting next to you, well, they'll be committing an offence. And so I think it's up to all of us to ensure that, we are ensuring this is put in place.

I mean, Australians will exercise common sense. They have been to date, and this provides the backstop of a legal enforcement but the the idea that there'd be significant resources dedicated to that task would not be practical, because remember, when you get an overwhelming number of people following that advice, then you're getting the effect which you want, which is that.

**JOURNALIST:** What's the penalty for committing the offence of not self-isolating?

**PRIME MINISTER:** That will be a matter for the states and territories under their own public health [inaudible].

**JOURNALIST:** [inaudible] What would would look like though? Would that mean fines or is it jail time?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Yes. Again, it's a matter for state authorities as to what penalties they place on that. The National Cabinet ensures that we have some coordination, but ultimately states and territories will make their own decisions.

**JOURNALIST:** Sorry, will there be any screening at borders of temperatures or anything like that? Or just all be self-isolation?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Yes. No no there will be. And there has been already. And for those for those, for those persons who come back and present with symptoms, they will be directed through the Australian Border Force to be given protective equipment. This group that we're now applying this requirement to is low risk. And we also do think, and the health advice is, is this that to provide the PPE equipment to everyone who comes through our airports would be an unnecessary depletion of that resource. We know those resources from our stockpile for health workers, those working in aged care facilities and so on. And so they will be able to return home. They are at a low risk, is the assessment. But for those who may be presenting with some concern or symptoms then they'll be provided with that equipment at the airports, as we already are for those who are coming from Iran or those who are coming from China, from South Korea and Italy.

**JOURNALIST:** What measures will the government be taking to prevent the spread by public transport?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Well, already the state governments have been doing a fair bit of that. And that is a matter that I know will be sort of worked on through the national coordinator messages which feeds up to the National Cabinet about what experience and best practice can be shared. The National Cabinet, yes, it's making decisions on things like I've talked about today to support with legislation, self-isolation arrangements and things of that nature. But the other thing that the National Cabinet is doing is sharing this practice information about how state governments are just practically dealing with; whether it's transport or indeed the very helpful discussion we had with both the New South Wales and the Victorian Premier sharing their experience about how they're dealing with schools. The Northern Territory Chief Minister, Michael Gunner, has some very specific issues that he has to deal with about access of essential services and workers going into remote communities in the Northern Territory. And he's already working with us. And so the Northern Territory and the arrangements that are there will become the model for what is done in remote indigenous communities in many other states and territories. So this is a highly collaborative process and we're all learning from each other and all supporting each other.

**JOURNALIST:** How will social distancing be instructed to schools and kids in schools. Will schools be given specific advice to tell their kids or will it be up to schools. How this health, social distancing, as you mentioned, is going to work?

**PRIME MINISTER:** The national information campaign is already running with information that will be available to all Australians, but it's pretty straightforward. A metre and a half. We're about a metre and a half away. Ensuring that, you know, you refrain from that sort of physical contact, which might be the handshake or even something a bit more intimate unless you're with your close family and friends. It's all common sense. You know, we don't need to tell Australians how to get out of bed in the morning and how to put their shoes and socks on and things like that. Australians understand. And I'm not making light



of this, I'm not. These are important, normal, common-sense social interaction measures that people can take. And they are very intuitive. And it's all about reducing the amount of direct physical contact that you have with others. That's a clear principle, which I think Australians can understand. And I would expect teachers, or those at preschool, or in churches or wherever. I know I got a message from my church during the course of the week after Friday and they were putting measures in place and good for the. School clubs and others are doing the same thing. It's just Australians getting together, working out how they're going to adjust. See, I really want Australians to get on with their lives as commonly as possible. But there will be disruptions and they will adjust. Australians, of course, can adjust. But what I hope won't happen, and I'm sure it won't, is that we won't lose our sense of Australian-ness in all of this, we will support each other. If you've got someone who's in self isolation particularly, there might be an elderly person who might live in your apartment or down the road, and they would be wisely exercising even greater precautions about their social interactions. So make them a casserole and leave it on the door or things like this. I think just Australia's helping each other out over the next few months. You know in the shopping centre aisle, you know, make sure someone who might be a bit more vulnerable than you can get what they're looking to get as well and I think just being good to each other is the right thing to do.

**JOURNALIST:** PM on the new travel arrangements, have you had a chat to, I know you said you spoke to Boris Johnson last night, but have you spoken to any other world leaders and specifically the White House? Because we're seeing a lot of cases coming from the US?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Yeah well it's our major source now coming out of the United States. And yes, we have had a lot of interaction with the United States and we will continue to, the Foreign Minister was only there this week. She returned yesterday. And so we've had a lot of interaction with the United States with the UK. The Five Eyes groups, and New Zealand I speak to the Prime Minister almost every other day. And one of the things I should mention that I spoke to Prime Minister Johnson about is when it comes to the G20, I'm also aware that Prime Minister Modi is keen to organise a link up between all the G20 leaders. I think that's, I think that's a commendable initiative. Australia obviously supports that. I've communicated that. That's a matter for the Saudi government who's the President of the G20 this year. But the Prime Minister and I agreed last night that an even more urgent meeting that could be needed would be a further meeting of the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors. This is a health crisis, but it has very serious economic impacts. Those economic impacts have been clearly affecting financial markets. To date, that has been managed, but we've seen some highly volatile and quite disruptive activity on our financial markets. We want to be assured through our cooperation, as occurred through the GFC amongst that very G20 group, that we can make sure that there is no further damage or undermining of financial markets and the Central Bank Governors and Finance Ministers are the best place to do that. Truth is that they only had a meeting a few weeks ago and at that meeting, things were at a very different stage as they are today. And I think that demonstrates I mean, there's a lot of wisdom in hindsight at the moment. But what we have to realise is this has been a very fast moving event. And so far, the decisions we've taken has put us in a good position. But you've got to stay in that position by constantly making additional decisions. And that's what the National Cabinet was set up to do.

**JOURNALIST:** When it comes to shopping and gathering supplies, what's the advice there? Because Victoria's Chief Medical Officer said 14 days of supplies are required. The federal chief medical officer said this morning, two to three days. What is the official advice?

**PRIME MINISTER:** I refer you, I understand, to the comments of Premier Andrews, made this morning that the medical officer in Victoria, I understand, has been misrepresented in what he said about that. And what you've heard from Dr. Murphy this morning is consistent with what the view is around the states

and territories. But I'd refer you to, I understand Premier Andrews brought this to my attention today. What was said has been misrepresented about that 14 day arrangement. And I mean, people should exercise common-sense. See, the thing is, the shops are going to remain open. You know, the electricity companies will still be selling the power. The phones are still going to work. The lights are going to continue to come on. The schools will continue to come together. The trains will continue to run. The airports will continue to function. This is not a cyclone or a physical event like that that shuts down parts of our cities in terms of a physical sense. It is something quite different. This is a biological virus that is affecting human to human transmission. And so I think we just need to get that into some sort of perspective in terms of how we moderate our response.

**JOURNALIST:** The NRL, though, says that it is actually not in that category that is in danger of being closed down. And they're now asking for potentially hundreds of million in support from your your package. But is that something you'd entertain?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Oh, we'll look at all of all of those issues. I understand that already today, I think over half a million they've put into the clubs, and there'll obviously be a lot of disruption, whether it's the NRL or the AFL or any of the large sporting competitions, but equally in the cultural community as well. They'll be there'll be events that won't be able to go ahead, there'll be cultural events that won't be able to go ahead. And it's important that what we're saying on the banning of gatherings of more than 500 persons, that is going to be supported by state legislation. So it's it's not an advisory. It's not, there's no discretion. There'll be requirements. And that has obvious implications for things like insurances, things of that nature. But we'll deal with those issues one after the other. Right now, though my real focus is on the further mitigations we have to put in place. The most important, having made this decision about further isolation of people coming to Australia. That does ensure that we have the strongest borders anywhere in the world when it comes to these sorts of issues. Australia has always been well known for its border protection on all matters and it's certainly the case when it comes to managing this issue. But in addition to that, it's also about ensuring that as a government, we keep taking decisions which keep us ahead of the curve.

**JOURNALIST:** What happens to, people who are going on domestic life, reconsidering that travel is a domestic flight, one of these static locations that you're talking about?

**PRIME MINISTER:** That's not our advice. Dr Kelly you might want to talk about flights?

**DR. KELLY:** Yes. So that wouldn't be the advice at the moment, but as I said before, we'd be looking at all measures as they go forward. There are both, domestic flights and generally short although there are some further destinations which are longer. But at the moment, there is no advice about restricting domestic travel.

**JOURNALIST:** When you have a look at those graphs, and the feeling in the community at the moment is, is one of anxiety, should Australians be afraid?

**PRIME MINISTER:** Australians should be careful. Australians should be listening to the advice that is provided, Australians should be exercising their common sense. But the thing I'm counting on more than anything else to achieve that outcome rather than that outcome, is that Australians be Australian. Now Australians can deal with this, we can deal with some change to our daily lives. We can deal with the surprises that may come as we get further information. We can deal with making common sense judgments every day. We can deal with looking after each other. We can deal with having to show a bit

of patience from time to time. And the odd frustration or disappointment Australians can deal with all of that. So long as Australians keep being Australian we'll get through this together.

Thank you all very much. Ta.

**[END]**

**Contacts: Press Office, (02) 6277 7744  
The Hon. Scott Morrison MP, Sydney**