



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

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EO&E...

PRIME MINISTER: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm joined today by the Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Sport and for Ageing, Richard Colbeck, and of course as always, by Professor Brendan Murphy, the Chief Medical Officer.

It's been another very productive meeting of the National Cabinet today and importantly today, we discussed many issues - both from the economic front as well as on the health front. Success during the COVID-19 pandemic is not just about containing the virus and having low numbers of cases. It is true that we have had some real success on the health front. There are now only around 1,000 active cases around the country today and in many jurisdictions on the numbers, no active cases in those jurisdictions and I note Andrew Barr today has made further announcements on the basis of that.

But that's not the only curve we need to flatten. We need to reduce unemployment, we need to get businesses open, we need to enable Australians to go back to work, to earn, to be able to support their families, their households, and support the Australian economy. These are the curves that we also need to influence. And that's what success will be measured by together with the outcomes we are seeking on health. We need to restart our economy, we need to restart our society, we can't keep Australia under the doona, we need to be able to move ahead.

National Cabinet was briefed again today by the Secretary of Treasury Dr Kennedy, and his advice confirms the significant impact that COVID-19 is having on our economy, and the decisions that have had to be taken to protect the health of the nation. There is now about 1.5 million, just over, Australians who are on JobSeeker. Over 900,000 claims have been processed in just over the past 6 weeks. This bears out the Treasury estimate that suggests unemployment rate will rise to 10 per cent, and potentially beyond. JobKeeper registrations are now over 650,000 businesses. Over 950,000 applications have been made to access super, totalling some \$7.9 billion in claims. More than 340,000 businesses have received a cashflow boost under our cashflow programme worth over \$6 billion dollars. 6.8 million Australians have received that one off payment, that \$750 dollar payment and that brings to a total of \$5.1 billion of those payments that have been made and of course another one will be made in July. There's also been, we've heard today, a significant fall expected in net overseas migration, which is expected to fall by about a third this year, financial year, and by 85 per cent off its peak, or off it's previous year, in the following year in '21, sorry 2021, sorry '21/'22.

Our economic and income support programmes have put a floor under our economy in these extreme times, it's all about underpinning confidence going forward, and these programmes have been put in place well before these rather concerning numbers whether it be on unemployment or business closures or others have been presented. Despite those figures, and those figures people will be seeing in the weeks and months ahead, it's important that Australians can take confidence that there has been a clear plan to get those supports in place early - to ensure that Australia can be cushioned from an even more significant blow that we've seen occur in so many other parts around the world. Not just on the health front, but on the economic front as well. And a key part of that plan going forward as we see these shocks hit our economy, is the plan to re-open and to rebuild. The road back, which we have been on now for a few weeks.

Today, the National Cabinet agreed to bring forward our consideration of the decision on relaxing restrictions to next Friday. Australians have earned an early mark. Through the work that they have done. Australians have earned an early mark through the work that they have done, and that decision will now be made on next Friday. And we'll be meeting twice over the course of the next week to ensure that we can work through the many things that have to be resolved in order to make those decisions.

Our plan has been to get the virus under control and to ensure that we can contain it, to get the preparations in place for our ICU systems and health systems, and to get the protections in place, the build up of the tracing capabilities within state health departments. The expansion of our ICU facilities. The build up and training of our workforces to ensure we can get the respirators in place and the access to the critical testing equipment and the tests as well as the personal protective equipment. Today, they considered at the reporting of the expert medical panel a series of conditions, precedent, that need to be satisfied in order to go forward with the easing restrictions and 11 out of those 15 conditions have already been met. And the Chief Medical Officer will go into further detail on those. But of those that remain outstanding, there is one that Australians can do something about, and that is downloading the COVIDSafe app. This is a critical issue for National Cabinet when it comes to making decisions next Friday about how restrictions can be eased.

There are currently over 3 and a half million downloads and registrations of the COVIDSafe app and there needs to be millions more. This is incredibly important. As I explained it the other day, it's like not putting on sunscreen, to go out into the blazing sun. The coronavirus is still out there. Our numbers may be low, but it's still out there. And if we allow Australians back out into a more open economy, a more open environment without the protection of the COVIDSafe app, which enables us to know who has been in contact, how we can isolate those groups, how we can constrain and constrict that virus from getting to other people. We need that tool so we can open up the economy. And that's why it's so important. So if you haven't downloaded the app yet, download it. If you know someone who hasn't downloaded the app yet and you have, encourage them to do so, because if you're doing that, then that is enabling the National Cabinet to be able to ease these restrictions next Friday. It's about putting the health protections in place so we can ensure that the coronavirus does not get a run on it again.

When we move to reduce those restrictions, the National Cabinet is very adamant that we want to ensure we keep moving forward. We do not want to go into a start, stop or an even worse; reverse process into the future. When we start opening up businesses again, that is going to require those businesses opening the doors, getting people back in, taking risks. And we don't want that to have to be reversed because of the virus getting a run on again. And that's why it's important that we get these protections in place. Kate Langbroek, I thought put it pretty well last night when she said we've got to be like the emblems on our Coat of Arms, the kangaroo and the emu. They only go forward and we only want to go forward when it comes to this. So it's pretty important that we get people downloading that app over the course of the

next week. So it's over to you Australia, as we go through this next 7 days and we will consider that when we come together in a week from now.

Now, in terms of some other important decisions that we've made today and issues that we've considered, there was the presentation, as I flagged earlier in the week from Christine Morgan on the National Mental Health Plan, and that's coming together. And we anticipate that hopefully that'll be in a position to be reviewed next Friday. We were also able to agree national principles for sport and recreation, and they'll be released today. And that also included a consideration of the elite sports codes. And we were also able to adopt the aged care code and that was strongly welcomed by the National Cabinet. And that's why the Minister for Aged Care joins me today. As you know, National Cabinet has had a very strong view about the need to ensure that its position, that it is held consistently from the advice received by the medical expert panel to ensure that Australians can continue to have reasonable access to their family, friends and others they're supporting in aged care facilities. I want to commend Minister Colbeck for the great job he's done over the course of this past week, working with the industry to establish an industry code that has been supported by the major peak, major peak aged care organisations in Australia, as well as the consumer groups in the aged care sector, and drawing together an industry code that reflects absolutely the National Cabinet advice that it had adopted from the medical expert panel, which provides important access for families and other support people to those who are in aged care facilities. And so we welcome that and we appreciate the collaborative way in which the industry is engaged with the government to achieve that over the course of the past week.

Now, in addition to that, what we're announcing today is the Commonwealth, will be putting an additional \$205 million into the aged care sector as a one off payment to facilities all around the country to support them in the costs that they are incurring to deal with the COVID-19 crisis in their sector. There are a range of additional costs and expenses that the aged care Minister has been able to identify working with the sector. And this payment is designed to give them that financial support so they can put all those measures in place, that will assist with the industry code implementation. It will keep those who are in aged care facilities safer and give their families greater peace of mind when it comes to how those issues have been managed within the aged care sector.

So with that, I might hand over to Richard to go through the industry code and the announcement we've made that brings to \$850 million that the federal government has put into aged care specifically to address the issues around the COVID-19 crisis.

Thanks, Richard.

SENATOR THE HON. RICHARD COLBECK, MINISTER FOR AGED CARE AND SENIOR AUSTRALIANS: Thanks. Thanks PM and firstly, I'll go to the code and can I specifically express my gratitude to the aged care sector for the very, very speedy way in which they've managed to pull this code together, which will facilitate visitation by residents, loved ones across the aged care sector. The concept was only designed earlier in the week and they've done a brilliant job, so all of the aged care residential facility peaks ACSA, LASA, Catholic Health Australia, Baptist Care Australia, the Aged Care Guild, Uniting Care and Anglicare have all signed up to this code as of last night. To the consumer organisations who also drove its design, Council of the Ageing, National Seniors, Dementia Australia, the older person's advocacy network, and Carers Australia, can I thank them also for the work that they've done. I'm not sure I've seen an industry code designed as quickly as this one was. But for it to facilitate the things that National Cabinet expressed on two occasions now on the advice of the AHPPC is fantastic. I've had some very, very good conversations with some key players in the sector this week with respect to the development of their code and things that they are already doing to facilitate visitation of loved ones into aged care facilities. And importantly, it not only contemplates visitation for those who are at end of life, which was something that the AHPPC

was concerned about, those in palliation, but also those who have had a long history of visitation, working with their loved ones, going in for meals, helping the aged care facility to, to support their relatives. So those people who have a history are also contemplated as part of the code. So, again, congratulations to the sector. Thank you so much for the work that you've done. And can I say, Prime Minister. I think the aged care sector should be congratulated for the work that it's done in managing COVID, in this country. We have had only 23 residential aged care facilities that have had an outbreak of COVID-19 of those 23, 15 have completely cleared it, 8 are still dealing with it. But there'll be more that will have cleared it in coming days. And that's a tribute to them. It's also a tribute to the work that the Australian community has done in managing transmission in the community, which has prevented it from getting in but, into the residential aged care facilities. But I think that's a great result. And in the majority of cases, it's been two, one, two or three cases within the facility. Only on a couple of occasions have we had more. And Dorothy Henderson Lodge, which was one of the first major outbreaks, is now actually COVID-19 free so great work by Dorothy Henderson Lodge. They should be congratulated for that work. It took a little while, but great work.

With respect to the announcement that the Prime Minister's mentioned for a COVID specific support payment of \$205 million across the sector. The sector will understand this more than perhaps others in the broader community, but providers across the country will get a \$900 per occupied bed support payment in residential codes MMN-1, Monash model one. So that's effectively metropolitan areas and those in regional Australia, in recognition of the fact that they generally have higher costs, will get a 50 per cent uplift on that, so \$1,350 dollars per residential bed. This will contribute towards the genuine extra costs that they are incurring as they manage COVID-19 outbreak. They are screening staff every day as they come and go from their shifts, particularly as they come in, so that we don't get COVID-19 into the facility. That takes them time, they will be screening visitors as they come into the facilities to ensure that we don't get COVID-19 outbreaks. They've suffered additional costs in things like personal protective equipment because it's been so rare and prices have gone up. So they've had some other costs that have increased as well. And of course, just in some of their other everyday work that they've been doing, they've had additional costs. So this measure is in recognition of those additional costs in managing COVID-19 and as the Prime Minister said, that takes the total amount that the Government's put in specifically for COVID-19, up to over \$850 million, which is a significant amount of money. Thanks, PM.

PRIME MINISTER: I'll ask Brendan to come up.

I just want to correct one thing I said before on net overseas migration. Off the 2018-19 year for net overseas migration, we're expecting just over a 30 per cent fall in 2019-20, the current financial year and in 2021, an 85 per cent fall off those 2018-19 levels as well. So they are quite significant falls.

Thank you, Brendan.

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: Thanks, PM. So the status of the pandemic in Australia today, we have 6,765 cases. Still consistently getting less than 20 new cases per day over recent days. 93 deaths, unfortunately, and we mustn't forget those tragic deaths. And we're testing extensively with over 570,000 tests done so far.

The Prime Minister talked about the conditions precedent that National Cabinet challenged us to make sure we met before they were prepared to consider any relaxation of current measures, and I was pleased to be able to present to the National Cabinet what we call the Pandemic Health Intelligence Plan. And I'll go into that in a little bit more in my presentation, at the end of my presentation. But in that plan was listed a table of those conditions precedent and we're doing pretty well. The conditions, I'll just outline

them in an overview way. The first one was around surveillance and we have a surveillance plan and we have sufficient surveillance mechanisms, surveillance being the tracking and identification of outbreaks.

Another one that we've met is what we call community adherence to public health measures, and we'll show you on the presentation that we're tracking that people are doing what we have said, they are reducing their mobility and their interactions as required by those original measures. Modelling was a prerequisite that was very important. And you've seen already each week that we are presenting modelling, we have data modelling. And yes, you'll see today later our modelling methodology changes to reflect the case numbers and the epidemiology. Testing capacity, expansion of testing capacity was a really important issue. You've heard the announcement from Minister Hunt earlier in this week about our secure supply line of COVID-19 PCR tests now. And we now have a framework of testing, which I'll come to later on.

Our public health workforce in the states and territories has to be mature and large enough to meet any response. In fact, every state and territory now expanded so much in the very active phase of the outbreak that they have now been able to stand down some of the expanded workforce. But they're there and ready and waiting if we need them again. Our contact tracing capacity had to be really good, and we've proven that we're tracing contacts very quickly at the moment with those small numbers of cases, and the methodology is really up to speed except for one thing, except for the app uptake and that's not green at the moment. As the Prime Minister has said, we need the app uptake to be higher before we can say that that final piece in the jigsaw puzzle of contact tracing is there.

Then there was a range of measures National Cabinet were very concerned about to make sure that we had in place, before we relaxed measures just on the off chance that we did have a big outbreak that we needed to manage in our health systems. So we needed a well-prepared health system with good surge capacity, with enough ventilators and an ICU expansion capacity. All of those are in place. Personal protective equipment was a big issue, very pleasing to say that we now are very clear that we have enough masks. That's a great thing after all the issues we've had with masks and making sure we can bring in sufficient supplies. We're still doing some work to be absolutely confident about other elements of PPE, but we've got good confidence and most supply lines are now being restored.

The other final two measures in the health system were drugs and other consumables. And again, we have done a good assessment of those and feel that they are in a good place. And we've also completed workforce training that was required to prepare the health systems. So those measures really gave us a pretty good tick from the National Cabinet today and that's the basis upon which the National Cabinet has said, bring back next week some measures for careful consideration of gentle relaxation.

So I'll now go to my now well-renowned weekly presentation and I will also talk a little bit about our testing capacity and the Pandemic Intelligence Plan. So this is a familiar graph to all of you and pretty convincingly, we have flattened the curve and you can see that our numbers of cases each day continue to be pretty flat. Next slide.

This I showed you also last week and this is the forecast of what the predictions from the previous case numbers that we would likely get and you can see again that we are having case numbers that are below the median predicted case number. So we're doing better than the modelling would have predicted from the previous data. Next slide.

Now, you know that there are only two jurisdictions left on this effective reproduction rate number. That's because although other jurisdictions have had cases, remember last week I said ACT and the Northern Territory had a badge of honour by dropping off, by not having any cases. But the case numbers in every

other jurisdiction are so small that the modellers feel that they can't usefully use the effective reproduction number. Those error margins are so broad in the other jurisdictions that the modellers aren't comfortable with producing that. Only in New South Wales and Tasmania are there enough numbers to show an effective reproduction number and even then they're pretty much at the lower limit of what you would expect. And you can see that Tasmania is comfortably now below the one benchmark as they have so expertly brought the north west Tasmania outbreak under control. And we do continue to congratulate the Tasmanian Public Health Unit and all of the people of north west Tasmania for complying with what was a very burdensome but necessary public health intervention. Next slide.

This is a new measure and we have this you'll see in the modelling paper that will be published on the Doherty website tonight. We'll show this for every jurisdiction. We're only showing it here for New South Wales because it becomes a very busy slide if we show too much. Basically, this is showing measures that people are adhering to distancing measures. So this is for New South Wales showing when we introduced those measures for Apple has given us data on directions for driving. You can see the directions for driving have dropped dramatically. Google has got data on time at transit stations. Again, that's dropped. But the converse is the Google data on times at residential. Google does track people. The COVIDSafe app doesn't. But this is showing how well people have adhered to our measures that we've put in place. And you can see some little spikes around Easter time. But generally, people are doing the right thing. Next slide.

So I said before that the effective reproduction rate is not really a valuable measure at the moment because case numbers are so small. So what we have now presented to the National Cabinet is this Pandemic Health Intelligence Plan. And we'll need to be looking at things that are much more granular than the effective reproduction rate. Our case numbers are so low now that we can analyse each case, each cluster and get really detailed epidemiological information on what's happening. And so we can get a feeling of whether there is a cluster that's breaking out and that we need to control. I've mentioned all of those parameters of the Pandemic Health Intelligence Plan before, but I do want to go into our testing strategy because this is really quite important. We've done a lot of work on that, as I've said on in meeting and on many occasions, we need to test more people if we are going to get on top of those small outbreaks. And we've seen a couple of them just in recent weeks, couple in Victoria, and they've got on top of them expertly and well and contained them. But we cannot afford to have an outbreak that takes off so that we get a second wave when we reduce restrictions, such as a number of other countries have seen. So our testing has to be very, very good.

The most important thing in testing is for everybody who has any respiratory symptoms, cough or a cold or a sore throat or runny nose. Please get tested. It's safe to get tested. There are testing centres, GPs can do testing, they can send you to pathology labs. It's very simple and straightforward. We want everybody who has a cough or a cold or any respiratory symptoms because most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, just like a cough or a cold - get tested and don't go to work, particularly if you work with vulnerable people. That's the most important thing. But we're also doing testing in a lot of other settings. Any outbreak in an age care sector. Minister Colbeck said we have done extremely well in most of those outbreaks. Sure, there have been some very troublesome ones and one that's very active at the moment, but in most cases, once you get one case, we go in and test every staff member, every resident and any potential contact, and that's enabled us to identify very quickly and exclude infection in others. Any health care sector outbreak will test all the health care workers, all the other asymptomatic patients, every contact of someone with COVID-19 is now going to be tested to make sure that we chase the contacts very actively and make sure we lock that down.

We have talked, there's been a lot of talk about what's called active surveillance, where you test, well asymptomatic people in the community. Given the current very low positivity in testing, that does not seem to be a very effective way of monitoring this virus. However, we are going to do what we call cohort

tests. So we want to make sure the community and sample sections of the community just to make sure that our confidence that we don't have significant asymptomatic transmission is correct. So we will be doing some testing of some consecutive elective surgery patients just to reassure those people coming in for surgery and the hospital staff that we're not having cases in that group. We will be also testing aged care workers voluntarily if they wish to, even though they're perfectly well, just to reassure us and them that they're not carrying this virus and we'll do a sample of those. Similarly, we'll be looking at some health care workers, again, with their consent and in partnership with their industrial organisations. And we'll be doing a range of other cohorts from time to time, just going out and sampling parts of the community just to assure that we are not seeing asymptomatic transmission. We know that there are some people who do have the virus detected without symptoms. We still don't really know whether they transmit the virus effectively or not. We still think that most people who are transmitting the virus from one person to another actually have some symptoms. That's why I say again and again and again, anyone with a cough or a cold or a sore throat or a temperature or a runny nose, please get tested. That, plus downloading the app and sticking to what we've asked you to do makes the country safe for you. So I'll stop there. Thanks, PM.

PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much, Brendan. Lanai, we'll start and just go across and work our way towards the back.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, can you give us any more indication about what things might be reopened once the decision is made next week? Will it be that people will be able to go back to pilates or barre classes or, you know, various other things?

PRIME MINISTER: I might have my first one, Lanai.

JOURNALIST: Great. Just on another issue that obviously has been topical this week in regards to China. You spoke about that this morning on radio. Is there anything further that you're doing in terms of ensuring that we continue to have a good relationship with China?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, on the first issue, National Cabinet will consider these things next Friday and so I'm not going to prejudice that discussion by canvassing any particular areas. People will be very familiar with the full range of restrictions that were put in place some weeks ago and they're all obviously being reviewed and they're being reviewed both in terms of the health mitigations that would need to be put in place if they were to reopen. But as well looking at the economic opportunities that are extended to those particular activities as well and that's the basis on which the assessment will be made. So I'm not going to second guess that process. There'll be a lot of work done. National Cabinet is meeting on Tuesday and is meeting on Friday. And it's largely focusing only on that issue so we can work through the many different options that we have available to us. We're also, through my Cabinet, I'm working directly with industry sectors about what mitigations can be put in place in workplaces. So it's not just about whether an activity can be reopened, it's how it can be reopened. The COVID safe economy, the COVID safe environment and society we're going to be living in will be different. Of course it will, because the virus will be out there and we need to be able to protect our economy, our health, our safety against the coronavirus in that environment. So those mitigations are very important and the AHPPC, the medical expert panel, is informing that process.

We work every day on our relationship with China. We have a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with China. It is a mutually beneficial partnership. It is not a one way street and is one that is, of course, important to Australia. Otherwise, we would never have entered into it and China would never have entered into it with Australia. And so we will continue to work within that arrangement and pursue that relationship based on that agreement. Phil?

JOURNALIST: PM on the app, the government, you've you know shied away or ruled out from mandating it, but would you encourage, there are reports of some employers who are making it a requirement of people coming back to work if you are going to have everyone sitting in the same office or workplace? Would you encourage that sort of action?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, it can't be a requirement, that's prevented under the legal arrangements, but we are encouraging as a public, in the public service, we are, we are encouraging it within the Commonwealth public service. The state governments will be encouraging it within the state public services to encourage the employees to download the COVIDSafe app. And there is nothing wrong with that. Patrons of takeaway cafes or restaurants or pubs operating in the takeaway mode, I'm sure will be encouraging their patrons to download the COVIDSafe app, because if you download the COVIDSafe app, then more businesses will be open, and that's it, so it's done on the basis of encouragement in the national public health interest. And, but I've got to say, in the national economic interests, the protections are there. They're in place. They've been reviewed. And you've seen all of that. And so it is our path back for people to download the COVIDSafe app.

JOURNALIST: PM, there's a lot of speculation about whether the NRL can begin its season at the end of May as it wants to. There's also speculation about whether a plane of Kiwi footy players can land this Sunday to begin preparations. Is it the case that National Cabinet has cleared any of that ground for NRL to start in that way and can I also ask a question of Professor Murphy on asymptomatic testing? I'm interested in your observations about whether, whether you'll do cohort testing of school-aged children and what your advice is today on asymptomatic transmission among school children?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, no, those authorities have not been provided and the National Cabinet has not provided that endorsement, nor is it for the National Cabinet to do that. The individual jurisdictions will ultimately provide any of the clearances that are necessary on a health basis to deal with any of the major codes. Be it the NRL, the AFL or others, we had a good discussion on that today. And we received the advice that we did from the medical expert panel. And what will be occurring is that those jurisdictions that are relevant to those codes are going to, through the medical expert panel, provide consistent health advice to those jurisdictions, which is Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, of course South Australia and others, about the decisions they would need to make regarding the proposals being put forward by those codes. But ultimately, those decisions will be made in those states, but at least they'll be doing so on the basis of a set of consistent medical advice and that should assist I think those codes and how they're progressing those issues and not having to do it on multiple occasions. In relation to the border issues with New Zealand well, that authority has not been provided and no amount of reporting it will change that decision. That will be made on the basis of the border assessments of the Australian Border Force. And they're working through that application. They've received that application. And when they're in a position to authorise it well they will, and that's how that will follow. Brendan?

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: So, thanks, on asymptomatic testing, we may someday, I think one state is already considering testing a cohort of teachers, not because we think teachers are at higher risk, but because they may feel that that would reassure them. We have tested a lot of asymptomatic children in outbreaks in New South Wales, you'll recall 800 of them were tested and I think 1 was positive. So we've already done some testing of children. There is increasing evidence from Europe now, studies from the UK, studies from the Netherlands that consistently show that transmission amongst children is not being seen. It's not significant. So there really isn't a strong basis to test a cohort of children at this time.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister you've said that you need the uptake of the app to increase dramatically in the next 7 days, are you prepared to put a figure on what you'd like to see in terms of the per cent of people? And also we've seen this movement data that the number of people staying at home versus going out, as these restrictions are eased, the burden to maintain that will fall much higher on the densely populated areas like Sydney. We've had states saying, you know, don't do a Bondi. What is your expectation of the community, if they head down to the beach and see that it's really busy? Are they supposed to go home? What is going to be put in place for cities that just aren't going to be able to social distance in the way that other regional areas could?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, first of all, no we haven't put a target number on. It just needs to be higher and it has to be as high as it possibly can be. And the higher the number it is, the greater protection there is, the higher the number of people who have downloaded COVIDsafe app, then the safer you are, being in the community, particularly if we are to move towards easing those restrictions. Now, in relation to that, in an environment where there'll be greater mobility. People need to exercise common sense. I think the principles of social distancing, physical distancing, with connection, as Christine Morgan put it, but that distancing of 1 and a half metres, this is something that I think has really started to sink in to most people. And those things would have to always be practised. So long as the coronavirus is out there, then that is your best defence against it. That together with hand hygiene and the many other elements that go into protecting individuals and downloading the COVIDSafe app is also very important for that. So I think people should exercise judgement in their own health interests. People walking into a crowded room, and Brendan may want to comment on this, will be putting themselves at risk. I mean, you wouldn't do, you wouldn't knowingly put your health at risk when you had clear knowledge that doing something like that would do that. And so people should act in their own interest and not put their health at risk by acting contrary to those social distancing principles at any time. But Brendan, do you want to comment on that?

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: So, thanks PM, so I think as I've said on many occasions, whilst we're living with this virus, the way we interact with each other, will have to be different and remain different. So we will have to practise that room density measures we'll have to practise that keeping at least one and a half metres apart from each other, where possible. And even when we do open up some things in the future, there will clearly be significant limits. There'll be limits on, there will continue to be limits on gathering, there will continue to be limits on people in rooms. But wherever you go, however you interact, you'll need to practise that distancing. And that is just a long-term adjustment that we all have to make. The other one I always say is that I think we're going to be washing our hands in a new way for the rest of our lives, even beyond this virus, because I think we've all learned how important hand hygiene is and we're going to keep doing it.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks, Jen?

JOURNALIST: In relation to the meeting, you've brought forward the National Cabinet meeting for easing restrictions on May 8. Can you elaborate on what you'll be discussing there or potentially moving on? Is that reopening pubs and clubs nationally, restaurants, is it relaxing the four square metre rule? And also for Professor Murphy, what's your reaction to the Victorian Deputy Chief Medical Officer who tweeted a comparison, well, compared COVID-19 to Captain Cook's landing?

PRIME MINISTER: Well the first one, I think I covered that off earlier. I mean, we'll be looking at all the matters that are currently subject to restrictions and we'll be reviewing that and making decisions about which are the ones we can move on and with a degree of confidence that we can do that safely. And that will bring about a welcome relief for the community and importantly, enable the economy to move to a higher gear. That's what we want to see happen. So I'm not going to flag in any particular ones at all. It's

important that the National Cabinet consider that based on the best possible medical advice. I think that's certainly the approach.

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: On that other issue. She's a fine young public health physician who's been working you know, 80 hours a week for the last two months. She made a personal tweet, and that's a matter, on a personal Twitter account, it's a matter for her. I don't personally concur with her view, but I think that's a matter for her.

PRIME MINISTER: Thanks, John?

JOURNALIST: Thanks PM, the 85 per cent decline forecast in net, of net overseas migration from next financial year. I mean, that sounds very significant economically, as you'd appreciate. What's the sort of economic advice you're getting about the potential economic impact from that? And it does suggest that the negative hit from coronavirus is going to drag well on into next year, at least from that. Even beyond the initial sort of lifting of social distancing measures and therefore, the economy might need some sort of policy support and other measures going forward well into next year?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, it is a significant drop. I mean, it's currently sitting around, in last year I think they had 240-odd thousand. And so that's a significant fall. And you'll be well aware from past Budgets the importance of those numbers and how they contribute to overall gross domestic product and its growth each year. And so that is a significant change. It is not expected to be a long term change in terms of net overseas migration. I mean, that is making assumptions about where borders will be over that, you know, up until the end of next year. Those assumptions are not unreasonable from where we sit today. But let's not forget that 6 weeks ago we didn't think we'd be here today. We didn't think we would have made this much progress on the coronavirus at this time and we have. So there are, I think, many uncertainties. But there's no doubt, John, that the coronavirus will have its immediate impact, which is what we are addressing through JobKeeper and JobSeeker and the cash flow support and the access to super and all of these arrangements to provide that underpinning, both to confidence and to people's incomes at a very, very devastating time. Beyond that emergency period, though, there will certainly be lagged impacts of COVID-19. Those will happen both within Australia as businesses seek to get back up on their feet and consumption seeks to lift to back to levels where it was and that may take some time. And it's important as we move into another phase that we not only give people the confidence about their jobs opening up and businesses opening up, but just for individuals to feel confident in their own health to be able to go and engage again in the community, which, and I'm sorry to sound like a broken record, but that's why downloading the COVIDSafe app is so important. That is the ticket to opening up our economy and getting people back into jobs and getting businesses open again and opening up those opportunities for social interaction again. So, John, yes there will be those lag effects and that's why I've flagged before that we need growth orientated policies to overcome what will be quite stiff headwinds, which will be the carryover from what we've seen from the COVID19 crisis.

JOURNALIST: Apart from the app, what specific steps are outstanding that Aussies need to tick off to earn that early mark next week? And how excited are you to get the Sharkies back out?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I can assure you I haven't asked the NRL to reset the competition points even though we had those first two losses. Look, I know everyone's looking forward to that coming back, but it's got to happen in accordance with the health rules and the other arrangements in place. There are very comprehensive proposals that have been put forward by a number of the codes and I know the states and territories will work through those I think very efficiently. And I thank the codes for the detailed work they've put into that and I know they want to get training going soon and hopefully that can be achieved.

When it comes to the other issues, I mean, the Chief Medical Officer went through them earlier. The main one is the app, downloading the COVIDSafe app is the major obstacle now between us freeing up a lot of these restrictions in a cautious way, in a careful way. It's not open slather. That's not what has ever been contemplated and I wouldn't want to raise expectations in that sense. They'll be carefully considered because we want to continue to build up. We don't want to have to go back. We don't want to have to be able to respond to an outbreak that gets well out of control and that's why these protections are important. But the areas that there are some issues around gowns, I think Brendan, and gloves, that's not seen as an unresolvable hurdle. That's an issue which will go on for some months. But we don't see that impeding us next week and there have been some others just around the testing regime and the rollout of that. But the plans are already in place for that. So the one that still remains uncertain is the degree to which we can get the COVIDSafe app throughout the community in a way that would give us confidence - that when we open up the economy, then when people go out into the economy, that if anyone is a risk, that those who have come in contact with them can be very quickly identified and we can keep it under control.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, still on sport, you say the National Cabinet agreed to these principles regarding sport and how they could go ahead. Are you able to run through what that is, particularly for community sport and when can we expect to see kids back on the soccer field and the netball field?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, the Sport Minister, who's here, he also has those responsibilities, he may want to speak to this. The principles today draw heavily on the Australian Institute of Sport's Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 environment and they're quite detailed and they'll be circulated. Many of you will probably be familiar with those already. They do set out important principles that, for example, outdoor activities are a lower risk setting for COVID-19 transmission. A lot more of the risk is in indoor facilities, not just playing indoor, but indoor change rooms and things like that and the mitigations you'd have to have in place to deal with that. It speaks of the need for community sport to be moving, not just elite sport. Now, that may not be able to be completely synchronised and you wouldn't have one necessarily hold up the other. But it's important that people should be able to see the sport, but they should be able to play it as well in those participation exercises. But that will be done in a staged manner. The principles talk about an initial phase of small groups, less than 10 person activities in a non-contact fashion, with individual jurisdictions determining how that progresses. The inclusion of the resumption of children's outdoor sport and the resumption of outdoor recreational activities. But these are the things that will be looked at next week. Decisions have not been taken to move on any of those matters, but these principles set out, I think, the basis upon which we might be able to go forward when we consider whether we can this time next week. But Richard, do you want to offer another comment on that?

SENATOR THE HON. RICHARD COLBECK, MINISTER FOR AGED CARE AND SENIOR AUSTRALIANS: Thanks, PM. So there's, as the PM's just indicated, a set of high-level principles which have been developed by the AHPPC, taken up by National Cabinet, that will provide that overarching framework for the recommencement of sport across the country. They are, again, as the Prime Minister indicated, very heavily guided by some work that's been done by, and led by the Australian Institute of Sport, and I extend my thanks to Dr David Hughes who's led that work, but also along with the chief medical officers from a number of the national sporting organisations and the professional codes have had input into the work that the AIS has coordinated. That contemplates a staged recommencement of sport. It indicates the types of activities at various levels that might be considered as part of that process and so when you see that document, we are currently at level A. As the National Cabinet considers opening up the capacity to move around. The opportunity goes then to level B, which talks, as the PM said, of commencing training in small groups of, say, up to 10 with 10 athletes and officials working together. And then stage C, which goes back to full training and full commencement. And so that I can get my plug in for COVIDSafe as well, if you want to get out to play, download the app today.

JOURNALIST: You mentioned 650,000 businesses have applied for JobKeeper.

PRIME MINISTER: Registered.

JOURNALIST: Registered, yep. Can I please ask how many employees are receiving that payment? And if the number of employees settles at something less than six million, will you commit to expand the eligibility criteria for that program, or is it possible it could come in at less than \$130 billion?

PRIME MINISTER: The Treasurer will have a bit more to say about the number of employees covered and because that process is still being evaluated through the tax office. So I'm not in a position to give you that figure today, but the Treasurer will have a bit more to say about that, I understand, next week. And at this point it is too early to make estimates about what the final reconciliation would be against the budgeted amount. And there are many calls, there are many calls on the Budget in relation to COVID-19 and we do see some movement between JobSeeker and JobKeeper. Remember the JobSeeker payments, that costing related to the additional payment and there is also the uplift in costs for the Commonwealth in relation to many other welfare payments that are happening at the moment as well, what's called the automatic stabilisers. So I can assure you the Commonwealth will be footing - that is, the Commonwealth taxpayer - will be footing a very big bill and they understand that. And that's why every single element of that we are considering very carefully and we've set the parameters for JobKeeper and for JobSeeker and we have no plans to change that, apart from the administrative changes like the ones the Treasurer announced last week.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, firstly, if there is not a dramatic uptake in the app by next Friday, will there still be further restrictions announced and also something I think many Australians want to know the answer to, when can we go to the pub?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, the first step to getting back to that is downloading COVIDSafe. Now, if that isn't an incentive for Australians to download COVIDSafe on a Friday, I don't know what is. And so I'd encourage people to do just that this afternoon and to encourage them if they're talking to each other on Zoom or they are having a cold one later on today in that environment, if they're looking forward to doing it in a pub? Well, that is a prerequisite to even getting to that conversation. So we're not, we haven't been considering additional restrictions, we've been out of that mode now for some weeks, so there's no suggestion that there'd be additional restrictions. But the degree, honestly, to which we can confidently ease restrictions that are in place now, it really does depend on how much of a coverage we can get with the COVIDSafe app and how much that builds over the course of the next week. It really does.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, Andrew Barr last night flagged that support for professional sporting bodies from governments may be at an end. We're talking about community sport today and the balance between getting kids on the field versus professionals. Can you take me through what the government's currently thinking about the level of sport, the level of support for professional sport compared to community sport. And to take me straight into the Border Force decision, what is holding that up? Specifically, what is the Border Force agent thinking about? Is it the employment potential for the NRL? Is it other compassionate grounds? Take us into that?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, let me deal with that one. I mean, they are exercising their authority as is extended to them under the Act. That's what I expect them to be doing. And they are just doing their job and they'll do it in the same way. And there will be no special treatment for the NRL or any other code. And they'll be treated like any other request. And I'm sure I have no doubt that there's no delay. This is

just the ABF officials doing their job as they do every single day, protecting Australia's borders and ensuring they're making wise decisions.

In relation to the support for professional sport or other sports. I mean, I'd probably better, might leave that to the Minister for Sport, but we have not contemplated or are we considering any changes to those arrangements that have been in place.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, [inaudible] a month ago when you were here announcing the free childcare package, you laid it down for about three months, but that it could be extended beyond the three months, given how Australia is travelling at the moment with talk of easing restrictions and so on, do you think that we will be in a position at the end of June to revert to the old childcare arrangements, or would the free childcare possibly be extended?

PRIME MINISTER: It's too early to speculate on that.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, Donald Trump said pretty clearly that the US has some evidence that the Coronavirus originated in a lab in Wuhan. How seriously do you take that comment and how seriously will you be pushing at that as an option in the review that you've flagged? And perhaps a separate question for Minister Colbeck. How concerned are you by the high infection rates and fatalities at the Newmarch house? And will the residents there who can't go to hospital still get access to ICU care and ventilators?

PRIME MINISTER: On the first one, what we have before us doesn't suggest that that is the likely source. There's nothing that we have that would indicate that was the likely source. Now you can't rule anything out in these environments. I mean, we know it started in China. We know it started in Wuhan. The most likely scenario that has been canvassed relates to wildlife wet markets, but that's a matter that would have to be thoroughly assessed. This is one of the reasons why it is important that we just have an objective, independent assessment of how this originated and learn the lessons from how that occurred. It's a, I think, an entirely sensible suggestion. It's one that has broad-based support. It's one that has been recommended by the European Union to the World Health Assembly. It's one that, a recommendation we will be supporting and speaking to. And we think that's really necessary. But in terms of what we understand, in terms of the origin of the virus, while that can't be ruled out, it's not something that we've seen any hard evidence of to suggest that is the position. But that's where it sits right now. But Richard, on the other matter?

SENATOR THE HON. RICHARD COLBECK, MINISTER FOR AGED CARE AND SENIOR AUSTRALIANS: Thanks. And look, a question that's been of concern in the community from a number of perspectives and the PM and I certainly extend our sympathies to the 13 families that have lost their loved ones so far. All of the residents within the facility are getting very high-quality care. We're operating what's called hospital in the home, and that's being facilitated by the local public health unit PHU from Nepean health. All of the residents, I'm advised, have end of life plans that they're being cared in accordance with. And so they are getting the care that they have prescribed within those, within those plans. And we're effectively running a mini hospital within the facility there is, there are doctors there on-site all the time. There are a very large cohort of nurses there as well as the normal care workers. And so there has been no limit on the resources made available to Newmarch in managing this, particularly since we took the actions that we did last week. Can I say we're all very concerned at the number of people within the facility that have contracted the virus. But as Professor Murphy indicated to me last week when we talked about it, this is what happens when you have somebody with a very high viral load in contact with people who have other co-morbidities and are very frail for a considerable period of time. And that's not this is not a finger pointing or blame exercise. It's a very, very unfortunate circumstance where somebody who is asymptomatic but obviously had a very high viral load was in contact with people for six days, residents

and staff. And this is the very, very tragic outcome of that. But we are doing everything we possibly can in accordance with the end of life care directives of all of the residents at the facility. There is one resident who is in hospital with, I think, a broken ankle. So not necessarily related specifically to COVID, but they all they are all getting by benefit of the work of both the Commonwealth and the New South Wales government who lead on public health, the very, very best care.

PRIME MINISTER: You had a phone hook-up last night with Mel and?

SENATOR THE HON. RICHARD COLBECK, MINISTER FOR AGED CARE AND SENIOR AUSTRALIANS: Yeah, I did a webinar with a number of the families with Melissa McIntosh, the local member. There's been a couple of webinars that have been conducted with the residents and some of the public health professionals that are involved from particularly Nepean health and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner was on the call with me last night and discussions with the families and also on another webinar that was run by Newmarch itself, Friday of last week with some of the infectious disease health professionals that are assisting with the management of the outbreak within the facility.

PRIME MINISTER: Sam?

JOURNALIST: [inaudible] go back to the labs in Wuhan, even though you think on the balance of probability that this did not come from the lab. Did you receive any early advice that that was a possibility. And in relation to what the inquiry is going to actually look at. Do you have any concerns or does Brendan Murphy have any concerns that China was not sharing as much information as they should have early on, given that they did identify that this was a coronavirus, bat-borne virus back in very early January?

PRIME MINISTER: The reports that you are referring to, they were public. I mean, they were being reported at the time. So, of course, the government was aware of those suggestions. They were in open source at the time. And there hasn't been anything subsequent to that that would have borne out those initial reports. As far as our government's concerned, the inquiry or review, the investigation that needs to take place, really does need to understand what happened. Where did it start? What could have been done to, and so we can learn if something similar would happen in any part of the world. So the world would be able to respond quicker because clearly in cases like this, time is everything. And this is why, again, I keep coming back to it on the COVIDsafe app. Time is critical in keeping in control. And over the top of this virus, every second counts. And that's why, particularly in those early phases, the ability to know what's going on and how to respond to it and its severity and getting access to transparent information in those circumstances is very important. And so these are things that any review, I think I'm sure, would reasonably look at to assist all of the other nations that are represented through the WHO and more broadly, can get access to that knowledge as fast as they possibly can to put the responses in place that are necessary to protect their citizen's health.

But Brendan, did you want to add anything to that?

PROFESSOR BRENDAN MURPHY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER: Not really much to add, PM. I think, you know, we were obviously had a lot of information coming out of China in those early days. You know, it's really hard to look back. You know, obviously, the Chinese authorities may, in their own review, may have decided that they might have done something different. But we had a lot of information coming out. And as I think as I've said, the turning point was in, around about the 19th and 20th of January when we were told that there was sustained human to human transmission in the early days it was thought that the virus was only coming from animals to humans. And at that stage, there probably was quite a bit of human to human transmission. And as the PM said, it's hard to know whether things could have been done differently, better. Generally, when you look back on something like this, you can always find things you

can improve. But we didn't, we weren't at that time of the view that information was being withheld from us.

PRIME MINISTER: That was not things we knew. But we know what's happened since and we know the devastation that this virus has had on the rest of the world. And so that's why it's just so important to understand what happened, to make sure that we can prevent such a broad-based global catastrophe from happening again. This has proved to be a once in a 100 year event. I hope it wouldn't have a greater frequency.

Thanks very much, everyone.

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