



**MEDIA RELEASE, Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

## ***“Holding the Line - Our Battle against COVID-19”***

The Hunter GP Association notes the deteriorating COVID-19 situation in Victoria, with hundreds of new cases being found daily, and metropolitan Melbourne being put into lockdown. We also note with particular concern that this increase in cases has coincided with school holidays, which commenced before the Victorian-NSW border “closed”.

Cases of community COVID-19 transmission have started to reappear in NSW, with a worrying cluster emerging in south-west Sydney.

Many of us have started shaking hands and hugging again, as well as meeting with friends in crowded cafes and restaurants.

Now, more than ever, we need to prevent a resurgence of COVID-19 that forces us back into lockdown. As a community, in this battle against COVID-19, we need to encourage each other to “hold the line”. We need to help each other maintain the “new normal”:

- Get tested (talk to your GP about this), even if you only have a slightly runny nose, a tickle in your throat, fever, fatigue, or loss of sense of smell or taste. Maintaining high testing rates is the only way we can be confident we will quickly pick up COVID-19 spreading in our community. Please don't go to work if you're unwell, and please don't send your child to school if they are unwell! We have to protect our community by staying at home until the test result comes back negative AND the symptoms have gone away.
- Keep physical distancing in public spaces
  - o Avoid physical greetings
  - o Stay 1.5 metres apart, especially inside shops
- Practice good hygiene
  - o wash your hands frequently
  - o use hand sanitizer frequently
  - o don't touch your face
- Consider wearing a mask, especially if you're in a place that forces you to be closer than 1.5m to another person (e.g. public transport)
- If you haven't already, download the COVIDsafe app

[Research from Sydney University](#) has shown that if 90% of us adhere to guidelines like this, we could effectively suppress COVID-19. But if just a few of us do not, and adherence drops to 70%, then we will lose control.

To avoid going in and out of lockdown, and to reduce loss of life and the terrible damage to our economy, we need to look out for each other. Particularly in the Hunter, if we work hard on the “new normal”, we may have an opportunity to keep our region open - even if Sydney ends up in lockdowns.

“Hold the line”, Novocastrians!

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