



AWA Insights

Trending COVID-19 News in Australia



Health & Economic Updates

As of the 1st of September 2020, 21,345 of the 25,746 cases of COVID-19 have fully recovered with 652 deaths reported nationwide. There have been over 6 million tests nationwide meaning only 0.4% of tests conducted across Australia have returned a positive result.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison says he wants state border closures “gone by Christmas” as they are not good for the economy, and also to ensure that people can be with loved ones over the holiday period. Speaking in parliament, Mr Morrison said that the downward trajectory of the virus means that he believes it is realistic that Australia can open domestic borders as long as we continue to ensure testing, tracing, and quarantining.

A troubling COVID-19 cluster in Sydney’s CBD appears to have subsided, according to NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian. Last week there were concerns of a resurgence following a total of 23 community transmitted cases linked to Tattersalls Gentlemen’s club in Sydney’s CBD. On Monday NSW only recorded 4 community transmission cases. NSW Chief Medical Officer Kerry Chant said she is “relieved” as the cluster was particularly worrying for contact tracers due to the CBD’s density and the high proportion of people who commute via public transport.

NSW Premier Berejikilian has announced that border restrictions will ease on Friday to allow for people from border communities to travel within a 50km radius of the NSW and Victorian borders. The announcement comes after mounting pressure on the state government to lift restrictions for those living in border communities.

Travel Updates

Research conducted by Dynata & Blackbox has revealed that Australians are eyeing the US, Japan and NZ as their top three travel destinations when travel restrictions are lifted. In other promising news, the report revealed that half of Australians would be willing to embark on a long haul trip within 12 months of lockdown ending, while 62% would be willing to go on a trip to neighbouring countries, and an overwhelming 93% flagging intentions to travel domestically. Australians also voiced their support for the industry at large, with 94% of survey participants stating that the travel industry is crucial for the economy, while 72% said the country was well prepared to resume tourism operations.

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The Tourism Restart Taskforce has said a support package in addition to JobKeeper is vital, as the restart of tourism in Australia is now "well behind the three-step reopening timetable" laid out by National Cabinet. In a meeting chaired by COVID Recovery Commission Head Nev Power, industry leaders sought to establish means of additional cash flow for businesses deemed too important to fail due to their role in attracting tourists to states and regions. Leaders also discussed the importance of promoting domestic tourism and noted the limited information regarding what infection rate would allow for a Trans-Tasman travel bubble.

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has released details of its formal Federal Budget submission, seeking \$125 million in funding to support the industry through the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiatives in the program include scaled "Back to Business" grants to assist travel agents to stay in business, cover some operational costs, and help them continue the work of both returning refunds to customers and assisting travellers in 2021 and beyond. AFTA CEO Darren Rudd said: "Now, more than ever, travel agents are proving their value to their customers and the increasing number of non-customers who have turned to them for support." AFTA said it estimated that 80% of the current travel industry workforce is working full time on refunds, cancellations and credits.



In New Zealand new COVID regulations have mandated the wearing of masks on all public transport, including aircraft. Anyone aged 12 and over who does not wear a face covering faces a \$300 infringement notice or a fine of up to \$1,000. Exemptions are available for health and disability reasons, and masks are not required on interisland ferries, in taxis and rideshare vehicles, on charter/ group tours or private flights.

Meanwhile, New Zealanders have responded hilariously to a claim that the country is a '#hellhole' in stage 2 lockdown. An offshore Twitter account with 7500 followers likened NZ to hell on Earth, saying: "You can't leave. And you can't easily have people in. And you're back in lockdown in major parts of the country. And the quarantine camps are public knowledge." Kiwis have hijacked the hashtag over 12,700 times with writers posting images of themselves out and about enjoying relative freedom, with one user writing: "The Nelson Market was cancelled so had to get fresh-baked bread and organic sausages from the farmer's market instead. Off for a stroll in native bush this afternoon and maybe go to a movie. O the tyranny of this jackbooted regime."



Media Updates

Facebook has said it will be forced to block all news in Australia if the Australia Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) proposed media bargaining code goes ahead. Facebook's Australia and New Zealand Managing Director, Will Eastmond, accused the ACCC of "not understanding the dynamic of the internet", and that it would be left with no choice but to withdraw from news in Australia entirely. Under the proposed bargaining arrangements, commercial media organisations would be able to enter into negotiations with Google and Facebook to determine an appropriate payment for news content, with arbitration to follow if they are unable to reach an agreement. The development of a mandatory code of conduct is part of the Government's response to the ACCC's Digital Platforms Inquiry final report to promote competition, enhance consumer protection and support a sustainable Australian media landscape.

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The Australian has cemented itself as the largest national newspaper, recording an increase in print readership and the largest digital growth of any newspaper in the country in the past 12 months. The masthead's online audience numbers have surged by 47% in the last 12 months whilst its print readership has increased by 3.4% meaning its readership totals over 4.4 million people. All 10 of the Australian's sections recorded growth with Commercial Property and Media up 47% and 43% respectively. The trend is reflective of the nation's broader media landscape with News Corp's total print and digital offerings reaching 17 million people per month, whilst Nine's total digital and print offerings reach an audience of 16.4 million people per month.

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