



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 25 March 2020

NATIONAL CABINET UPDATE

Australian governments continue to work together to slow the spread of coronavirus to save lives.

Every extra bit of time allows us to better prepare our health system and put measures in place to protect Australian lives.

The Prime Minister, state and territory Premiers and Chief Ministers continued their meeting on 25 March as the National Cabinet to discuss enhanced health measures to support our efforts to quickly test and contact trace coronavirus in our community.

Expansion of coronavirus testing criteria

Australia has one of the most rigorous coronavirus testing systems in the world. To further protect Australia, National Cabinet agreed to an Australian Health Principal Protection Committee (AHPPC) recommendation to expand the current coronavirus testing criteria to include testing people with fever or acute respiratory infection in:

- all health workers
- all aged/residential care workers
- geographically localised areas where there is elevated risk of community transmission as defined by the local public health unit
- where no community transmission is occurring, high risk settings where there are two or more plausibly-linked cases, for example:
 - aged and residential care
 - rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
 - detention centres/correctional facilities
 - boarding schools
 - military bases (including Navy ships) that have live-in accommodation.

National Cabinet also agreed that testing will be expanded to include hospitalised patients with fever and acute respiratory symptoms of unknown cause, at the discretion of the treating clinician.

This is the minimum testing criteria. States and territories have the discretion to expand their own criteria for testing if they have capacity.

Temporary suspension of all semi-urgent elective surgery

National Cabinet endorsed the recommendation for states and territories to suspend all non-urgent elective surgery.

National Cabinet agreed to extend the deadline for the suspension of semi urgent Category 2 and 3 elective surgeries at private hospitals to 11.59pm on 1 April 2020.

National Cabinet agreed that states and territories will continue to work with private hospital groups to ensure they can support efforts to protect Australians against coronavirus.

The changes will allow greater transition for the community to the new arrangements and ensure the national supply of essential PPE - such as masks, gowns, gloves and goggles for the healthcare workforce.

Nationally consistent public directions on self-isolation for individuals

National Cabinet agreed to implement nationally consistent public health directions, at the state and territory level, on self-quarantine for individuals diagnosed with coronavirus.

Further measures

National Cabinet will consider the need for any further measures at their next meeting on Friday 27 March 2020.

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