



30 August 2020

Dear colleagues,

Queensland reported an additional 4 new cases overnight, bringing our State's total number of active cases to 28. Like yesterday, these new cases are known contacts of existing cases, linked to the Queensland Corrective Services Academy. We do not have evidence of unknown transmission happening in our community today, but we have to be alert to the possibility of that over coming weeks.

Three of the new cases are people who live in the same household as existing cases. The fourth case was a close contact of a known case. This highlights to me the very important strategies of physical distancing and limiting contact with others in your home or outside. Whilst the limit for gatherings is currently 10 (in your own home or in other areas), please treat this as an absolute maximum, and not a target!

We do expect to see more cases over the coming days - with good management we would already know about these people and have them in quarantine. A massive shoutout to our agile and high performing team of contact tracers from the Public Health Unit. They are working at a rapid speed to identify, contact and inform these people of the next steps.

Updated list of venues

Overnight, Queensland Health has expanded its list of venues that confirmed COVID-19 cases have visited. The updated list is available at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/contact-tracing>.

This list is made public to identify casual contacts so they can closely monitor for symptoms and attend for testing if needed. If you are identified as a close contact, you will be contacted directly by the Public Health Unit and given further information.

If you are a casual contact, even the mildest symptoms should trigger you to get a test. Please take this seriously.

Current activity in Metro North

I'd like to give you an update on what we've been working on today.

One of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 recorded in yesterday's numbers attended (before being aware they were a close contact, and before any symptoms developed) a Child Care Centre in the Metro North catchment. As a result, we have been working with our expert team at the Public Health Unit and the impacted facility to communicate with all families and staff about the next steps.

The centre is now closed for deep cleaning and anyone who attended the centre for more than 15 minutes on the one day the case attended have been identified as close contacts and are now required to go into quarantine and be tested.

We have extended the availability for testing to the household members of the close contacts and all families who usually attend the centre.

We understand that attending a fever clinic with children is a logistical challenge, so we will be establishing a mobile clinic, close to the homes of the affected families, which will begin testing tomorrow morning. Thank you to our unstoppable team at Community and Oral Health for working this one! We anticipate about 400-500 tests will be performed at this new location over coming days.

Until we learn the results of testing from the Child Care Centre, there is no requirements for anyone else outside of the identified close contacts and their household members to either quarantine or get tested. Of course, anyone who develops symptoms should get tested regardless of where they have been and who they have had contact with. We will keep you updated on this matter in the days to come.

Darling Downs – new restricted area

As a result of some of the locations visited by a confirmed case, the [restrictions](#) that currently apply to us in Metro North, and other [Local Government Areas](#) (Metro South, West Moreton and Gold Coast), will be extended the Darling Downs region as of 8am tomorrow.

This means that the Darling Downs area will now be subject to the same [movement and gathering restrictions](#), [hospital visitor directions](#) and [extra restrictions in aged care facilities](#) and [disability accommodation services and](#) the enhanced use of PPE within the Hospital and Health Service. This may impact some of you who live or spend time in this area, so please familiarise yourself with these requirements.

Advice on masks in public

If you have been tuning into the daily press conferences with the Chief Health Officer, you'll know she's been encouraging us to really step up our level of alertness and actively practice our key prevention strategies, such as physical distancing and consistent hand hygiene.

While these remain the gold standard of COVID-19 prevention methods, the CHO has encouraged us to consider wearing masks if we're in situations where physical distancing is not possible, such as in a ride share, or a busy space.

Masks that are ideal for these scenarios include:

- flat, non-clinical surgical masks that can be purchased in pharmacies and other locations (supermarkets, variety stores);
- [home-made three layer masks](#) or
- store purchased cloth three layered masks.

Please leave our clinical masks in the workplace for use at work.

There is an abundance of caution at the moment, but it is very sensible we stay risk averse. By staying cautious, we are preventing those numbers going up in the weeks to come, and the need to enact further restrictions.

Testing numbers

The number of people getting tested has settled to baseline levels over the past few days, which has given our colleagues at Queensland Pathology the space to complete the backlog of testing. Current turnaround time for testing is about 1 day.

We anticipate we will continue to see a big push from the Chief Health Officer to be incredibly vigilant and come forward for testing if you experience even the mildest of symptoms. Please listen to the advice. Our testing facilities are equipped to respond to testing demand as required.

Metro North activity – hotel quarantine

In the background of all this activity, I'd like to remind you that we have a large and amazing team supporting over 1,700 people currently in hotel quarantine.

As you can imagine, this a complex task! It is an extraordinary effort to coordinate the support for these people who are in quarantine, ensuring they all have the right information at hand, delivering periodic screening throughout their stay and undertaking pre-discharge testing.

Well done and thank you to the incredible team working around the clock to support our hotels and prevent community transmission.

Vidcasts

Thank you to everyone who tuned in to our vidcast this morning. We are a 24/7 service, so it is important we give those of you who work over the weekends the opportunity to chime in.

Remember the vidcasts will be reducing as of this week to Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with a special additional vidcast on Tuesday planned to help you with mask wearing tips and tricks. Vidcasts will continue operating on at least one day over the weekend until further notice.

Take care of you

This is not a sprint – this is a marathon! This has been said a lot but as we sit here in August, several months on from learning about coronavirus, and with continuous change on the horizon, this statement resonates more than ever.

This situation is taking a toll on everyone – some more than others. Whether it's not being able to see our friends and family as much as we used to, or simply feeling a level of concern. Please continue to speak up if you have questions or need help, have a chat with a colleague or reach out to our support services listed on the [staff wellbeing page](#).

Enjoy the rest of your weekend. As always, you can be sure we will update you as new information becomes available.

Kind regards,
Dr Elizabeth Rushbrook
Metro North Incident Commander

Metro North HHS – Overview of Cases*

HHS	Patients being managed by HHS						FEVER Clinics		
	Total In-patients			Virtual Ward / HITH / or similar	Deaths **	Total cases managed by HHS (including recovered) ***	# of clinics	Presentations	
	ICU Pts		ICU-VENTILATED					Last 24 hrs	TOTAL^
	ICU-NOT VENTILATED	ICU-VENTILATED							
MN TOTAL	0	0	0	0	3	342	6	657	76,168

*With effect 30 August 2020, 1000

**Metro North has three recorded deaths (one person a return traveller into NSW, who passed away in NSW)

*** These numbers reflect the cases being managed by Metro North.