



RURAL HEALTH ROUND-UP REPORT

Period ending: 16 April 2020

- **WORLD FIRST RAPID COVID19 TESTING TO PROTECT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES**

Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, says the Australian Government is investing \$3.3 million to establish a rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) Remote Point of Care Testing Program for remote and rural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Under the program, people will benefit from testing times being cut to around 45 minutes. This will be a game-changing improvement for areas such as the Kimberley where receiving a test result can currently take up to 10 days. Once fully rolled out, there will be 83 testing sites in place across Indigenous communities most at risk, and most in need. The sites are being carefully selected, in partnership with key stakeholders including services and state and territory authorities, to ensure there is coverage across remote Australia. **See attachment rapid testing.**

- **\$3 MILLION TO BOOST THE NATIONAL COORDINATED COVID-19 RESEARCH RESPONSE**

The Australian Government will provide a further \$3 million to support frontline health workers with training and information which will support the treatment of patients with coronavirus. \$1 million in funding from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) will transform the treatment and management of patients with severe coronavirus, delivering better patient outcomes. The CovED initiative involves using artificial intelligence to support frontline health workers using CT scans to quickly and more accurately diagnose the severity of coronavirus in patients who are having difficulty breathing. This project will be delivered through a consortium led by DetectED-X (a University of Sydney start-up) and the coronavirus Image Biobank, with support from iCoreLab and a large consortium of University of Sydney and clinical experts. **See attachment Hunt.**

- **REGIONAL COVID-19 RESPIRATORY CLINIC OPENS IN WAGGA WAGGA**

The first rural GP-led COVID-19 respiratory clinic in New South Wales officially opened today at Wagga Wagga's Glenrock Country Practice. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Federal Member for Riverina Michael McCormack said the new respiratory clinic, assembled at Dr Ayman Shenouda's practice, was part of the Australian Government's \$2.4 billion health package to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. "Wagga Wagga is a health hub for the Riverina and the Murrumbidgee Valley with more than 250,000 people relying on the regional city's health services and medical professionals," Mr McCormack said. **See attachment Wagga.**

- **NATIONAL ALLERGY STRATEGY INFORMATION**

This report is prepared and circulated by ARHEN to keep UDRHs up-to-date with current issues in rural/remote health. Recipients are welcome to forward it to others.



See

https://nationalallergystrategy.org.au/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=archive&task=view&mailid=65&key=cZBC0GRL&subid=978-F9FzC4rFxt9Yl6&tmpl=component

- **CONCERNS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER CULTURAL SAFETY**

<http://www.indigenousspsychology.com.au/news/521/australian-indigenous-psychologists-association-aipa-welcomes-the-government-s-pledge-to-support-mental-health-during-covid-19->

- **LATEST NACCHO NEWS**

See attachment NACCHO.

- **RACGP FOUNDATION OFFERS FUNDING TO GPs FOR COVID-19 RESEARCH PROJECTS**

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Foundation is offering funding to GPs for research projects relating to COVID-19 and general practice. Since the 1950s, the RACGP Foundation has supported medical research into primary health care - nurturing GPs in discovering new ideas and solutions to ensure every Australian's health is a priority. The COVID-19 research grant is being offered with the support of HCF Research Foundation. RACGP President Dr Harry Nespolon said COVID-19 presented an unprecedented challenge to GPs. **See attachment racgp.**

- **ARTICLE ON CMO BRENDAN MURPHY**

https://www.crikey.com.au/2020/04/16/brendan-murphy-profile-coronavirus/?utm_campaign=Daily&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&ins=SU1FWVFTmxGNFBkQ0FxeFlxSDc5Zz09

- **NBN COVID 19-INFORMATION**

Information from the NBN as part of a NRHA COVID-19 update. It includes information about the announcement by the Federal Minister for Communications & Cyber Safety, Paul Fletcher, about how members can access the 50/20 upgrade. There are also tips on working from home and a link to the NBN COVID-19 blog, which is regularly updated. See attachment NBN.

- **REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW GETS COVID BOOST**

Vital infrastructure projects will be fast-tracked in regional NSW to help local industries, councils and communities rebuild and recover from the impacts of drought, bushfire and COVID-19. Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro said more than \$100 million of the NSW Government's

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COVID-19 stimulus package will go towards the expansion of plantation nurseries to boost production, infrastructure repairs in State forests, the rebuild of local showgrounds, and vital upgrades to regional hospitals, courthouses and Aboriginal housing. **See attachment regional.**