



COVID-19 Daily Briefing

Tuesday, 24th March 2020

[Political Response](#) | [Corporate Response](#) | [Economic Impact](#) | [Community Response](#) | [Agency Response](#) | [Commentary](#) | [International Coverage](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the Coronavirus public health emergency that continues to spread across the globe, Isentia has compiled a comprehensive briefing of the key media coverage to hopefully assist you in navigating the event.

Australia

The Australian Department of Health's latest update is March 24 and is reporting that 1,823 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Australia.

Updates from the Australian Department of Health can be found here:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

New Zealand

The New Zealand Ministry of Health's latest update is March 23 and is reporting that there are 102 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand.

Updates from the New Zealand Ministry of Health can be found here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

The Coronavirus Tracker will break down the headlines, trends and stats for you weekly.

Stay across the conversation and subscribe for your sample: <https://bit.ly/2TqyEFb>

POLITICAL RESPONSE

Dentists banned from prescribing potential COVID-19 drug to self, family

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

The Australian government has rushed through an emergency regulation banning dentists from prescribing an arthritis drug being touted as a potential COVID-19 treatment, after reports some were prescribing it in bulk to themselves and their families. That has led to shortages for patients who really need the drugs.

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NSW prepares for early release of prisoners during COVID-19 pandemic

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

The NSW government is preparing for the early release of some of the state's 13,000 prisoners in response to the coronavirus pandemic, among a raft of other emergency changes to the justice system. Draft legislation seen by the Herald allows the state's Corrective Services Commissioner to make orders permitting prisoners to be released early on parole if the commissioner is satisfied it is "reasonably necessary" because of the risk the COVID-19 pandemic poses to public health or to the good order and security of prisons.

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Coronavirus lockdown: \$63K fine for crossing Northern Territory border and not self-isolating

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020

States and territories clamping down on arrivals are threatening fines of up to \$63,000 to travellers who cross the border and fail to self-isolate. Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory have each taken the drastic step of effectively closing their borders and requiring all who enter to quarantine for two weeks to stem the spread of coronavirus.

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Emotional Gunner outlines NT virus impact

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Greg Roberts

An emotional Northern Territory Chief Minister Michael Gunner has broken down while explaining to people how tough new laws aimed at stopping the coronavirus will affect their lives. He brought up his own experience in being rushed to hospital last October as an example of why it was important to stop the rapid spread and save lives.

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Families of stranded Aussies on board the Costa Victoria beg the government to intervene as the captain reveals there is coronavirus on board after announcing ship would have to dock in Italy

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Zoe Zaczek

Australians stranded on a cruise ship are terrified they will be left to die after the captain confirmed there was a case of coronavirus on board. The Costa Victoria has already been denied entry into ports in both Asia and Europe including Croatia, the UAE and Israel.

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ABC News, Mornings, 24/03/2020, Joe O'Brien

Press conference with Anne Ruston, Federal Minister for Families and Social Services at Parliament House, Canberra. Ruston states the Social Services will respond to the current coronavirus crisis for the next nine months.

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 24/03/2020, Michael Rowland and Lisa Millar

Press Conference with NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, NSW Education Minister Sarah Mitchell and chief health officer Dr Kerry Chant. Berejiklian says NSW is heading to a critical stage when it comes to the virus and spread of the virus must be stopped.

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ABC News, Mornings, 24/03/2020, Joe O'Brien

Press conference with Labor Leader Anthony Albanese in Canberra. Albanese says he has presented proposals to PM Scott Morrison and Treasurer Josh Frydenberg yesterday which are supported by Finance Minister Mathias Cormann, the Senate, and the House of Representatives.

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Channel 7, The Morning Show, 24/03/2020, Larry Emdur and Kylie Gillies

Interview with Greg Hunt, Federal Minister for Health. Gillies says Australia has 1886 cases of COVID-19 with seven deaths. Emdur says cases in NSW has increased by 170, with 21 new cases confirmed this morning. Hunt says the national task is around flattening the curve by reducing the number of cases and reducing the impact on the vulnerable.

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ABC News, Mornings, 24/03/2020, Joe O'Brien

Press conference with Peter Gutwein, Tas Premier, Sarah Courtney, Tas Minister for Health and Dr Mark Veitch, Head of Public Health Tasmania. O'Brien notes six more cases of coronavirus have been confirmed in Tasmania.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 24/03/2020, David Koch, Samantha Armytage, Natalie Barr, Mark Beretta

The Queensland Teachers' Union is threatening to go on strike if schools remain open despite the threat of coronavirus. Meanwhile, people were left confused as the NSW Government has ordered schools to remain open while urging parents that students should be kept at home at the same time.

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[Back to Top](#)

CORPORATE RESPONSE

ACCC gives supermarkets green light to co-operate

The Australian, Other, 24/03/2020, Eli Greenblat

In an unprecedented move competition regulator the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will allow the nation's biggest supermarkets - Woolworths, Coles, Aldi and wholesaler Metcash - to work with each other over the sourcing, supply and shipment of food. The interim authorisation would allow supermarkets to co-ordinate with each other when working with manufacturers, suppliers, and transport and logistics providers.

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Coronavirus small business wage subsidies only a temporary fix

The Australian, Other, 24/03/2020, Richard Ferguson

Australia's small business groups are warning new \$100,000 wage subsidies will only provide temporary relief to the struggling sector's workers as thousands of people join unemployment queues. The government will provide payments to businesses with turnovers under \$50m based on how much tax they withhold from staff wages and salaries from April - ensuring the more staff a business has, the more money they will get to keep.

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Coronavirus: Coles extends exclusive shopping hour to emergency workers

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Natalie Brown

Supermarket giant Coles has announced it is extending its dedicated "community" hour for the elderly and disabled to emergency service workers. Starting Thursday, from 7am the first hour of trade on Tuesdays and Thursdays will now be available to emergency services and healthcare workers who hold an Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) card, have a workplace ID or are wearing their work uniform.

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Uncertainty remains around if banks will pass on latest rate cut

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Sophie Elsworth

Mortgage customers need to be checking their interest rates now to ensure they are not paying too much as months of economic uncertainty remain. The central bank, the Reserve Bank of Australia, slashed the cut rate for the second time this month to a record low of 0.25 per cent, delivering borrowers more relief.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 24/03/2020, David Koch, Samantha Armytage, Natalie Barr, Mark Beretta

Interview with Todd Greenberg, CEO, NRL. Koch says NRL bosses stated they had no option but to suspend the 2020 season indefinitely because of the rapid spread of the coronavirus.

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[Back to Top](#)

ECONOMIC IMPACT

AustralianSuper slashes value of unlisted assets in 'unique' times

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/03/2020, Joanna Mather

The nation's largest superannuation fund, AustralianSuper, has revalued its unlisted assets such as infrastructure downwards by 7.5 per cent, wiping 2 per cent off the value of its flagship balanced fund. Unlisted assets are typically revalued quarterly but this is the first out-of-cycle adjustment AustralianSuper has ever made.

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Consumer confidence falls to lowest level since last recession

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

Consumer confidence has plummeted to its lowest level since Australia's last recession as shoppers become panicked by the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. The ANZ/Roy Morgan weekly measure of consumer sentiment tumbled 27.8 per cent through the past seven days to sit now just above its all-time low recorded in 1990.

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Coronavirus Australia: Michael Hill closes 300 stores

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Alexis Carey

Iconic jewellery chain Michael Hill has taken the extraordinary step of closing 300 shops around the globe as a result of the escalating COVID-19 crisis. In a statement issued to investors this morning, the ASX-listed company revealed it was taking drastic measures as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic, which has devastated sales.

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Seven West Media pulls guidance on coronavirus unknowns

WA Today, Other, 24/03/2020, Sarah Danckert

Debt-heavy broadcaster Seven West Media has withdrawn its guidance for 2020 citing a material fall in advertising market activity as a result of the economic impact of the coronavirus. The media group, chaired by billionaire Kerry Stokes, also cited the suspension or postponement of productions and events - most notably the AFL season and the Australian Olympic Committee's withdrawal from the Tokyo Olympics - when stepping away from the forecasts it gave to shareholders last year.

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[Back to Top](#)

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Sidelined athletes use their platforms and free time to raise money for coronavirus relief

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

With sports on hold amid the coronavirus outbreak, athletes around the world suddenly have an unfamiliar abundance of free time. Soccer players are juggling toilet paper rolls. Some athletes have posted videos of makeshift at-home workouts. But many of these stars have also turned to their massive followings to kick-start fundraisers aimed at helping communities affected by the coronavirus.

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Vic businesses adapt before shutdown

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Ulises Izquierdo

Even before the Victorian government declared a shutdown of non-essential services, the coronavirus was forcing businesses to get creative to survive. A martial arts gym shifting to online tutorials and a restaurant chain transforming into a deli are some of the ways Melbourne businesses have tried to keep afloat while the deadly virus depletes patronage.

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[Back to Top](#)

AGENCY RESPONSE

Coronavirus Australia: Test kits approved giving results in 15 minutes

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Sarah McPhee

Researchers in Melbourne have received funding to develop a coronavirus test that can return a result within 30 minutes, as an even faster testing kit is given the green light in Australia. The federal government has injected \$2.6 million into four projects at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity including the "new, simpler Australian coronavirus pathology test".

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AMA calls for 'medi hotels' to halt virus

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Cameron Whiteley

A dedicated "medi hotel" system to treat patients with mild cases of coronavirus should be introduced in Tasmania to stop the spread of the virus, the Australian Medical Association argues. It comes as the State Government prepares to take possession of a University of Tasmania-owned accommodation facility to treat COVID-19 patients.

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Lockdowns not enough to defeat coronavirus

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Reuters

Countries can't simply lock down their societies to defeat coronavirus, the World Health Organisation's top emergency expert says, adding that public health measures are needed to avoid a resurgence of the virus later on. "What we really need to focus on is finding those who are sick, those who have the virus, and isolate them, find their contacts and isolate them," Mike Ryan said in an interview on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

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Sky News Live, AM Agenda, 24/03/2020, Tom Connell

Interview with Australian Medical Association SA GP Dr Chris Moy. Connell says they will take and answer questions about COVID-19 every Tuesday. He asks where Australia is in terms of flattening the curb of coronavirus. Moy mentions Australia is in a better position.

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[Back to Top](#)

COMMENTARY

Plea to help the shows go on

The Australian, Other, 23/03/2020, Matthew Westwood

The covid-19 rescue package will assist small companies, but there are no measures to save a sector that is going to the wall. Fiona Choi and Michele Lim Davidson in Benjamin Law's Torch the Place at Melbourne Theatre Company.

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[Back to Top](#)

INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

20-somethings now realizing that they can get coronavirus, too

nytimes.com, General News, 24/03/2020, Kimiko De Freytas-Tamura

More than 40 percent of those who have tested positive for the virus in New York City are between the ages of 18 and 44. Marissa Crider set up strict house rules after recently taking in a third roommate in her apartment in Queens.

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Coronavirus: Emergency touches every part of UK life

bbc.com, General News, 24/03/2020

Wuhan is more than 5,000 miles away. But from tonight, the virus that spread from that part of China affects every individual, every family, every household, every business in the country - and it couldn't be closer to home. At a desk in Downing Street, the prime minister made an announcement that has no comparison in our recent history, instructing everyone in the country to close the doors, stay inside to save lives.

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Donald Trump drops 'Chinese virus' terminology in White House briefing, calls for protecting Asian-Americans

scmp.com, General News, 24/03/2020

US President Donald Trump on Monday dropped his use of the term "Chinese virus" for the coronavirus that has been spreading worldwide and called for the protection of Asian-Americans. "It's very important that we totally protect our Asian-American community in the United States and all around the world," Trump said at a White House briefing.

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Myanmar confirms first coronavirus cases

philstar.com, General News, 24/03/2020, Sun Myat

Myanmar confirmed its first cases of the deadly novel coronavirus late Monday after weeks of increasing scepticism over the under-developed southeast Asian nation's claims to be free of the disease. The country of 54 million people had been the world's largest country by population not to report a single case of the pandemic that has confined more than 1.7 billion to their homes.

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[Back to Top](#)

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