

COVID-19 Morning Briefing

Wednesday, 29th April 2020

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CURRENT STATUS

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 April 28th and is reporting that 6,731 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Australia. More than 530,000 tests have been conducted across 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 April 28th and is reporting that there are 1,124 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand. 126,066 tests have been conducted across 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>

Across the world

Across the world there have been more than 3 million confirmed cases of COVID-19.

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/2TgyEFb>

IN AUSTRALIA

LOCATION	CONFIRMED CASES
Australian Capital Territory	106
New South Wales	3,009
Northern Territory	27
Queensland	1,033
South Australia	438
Tasmania	217
Victoria	1,351
Western Australia	550
TOTAL	6,731

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KEY COVERAGE

Morrison gets Chinese burn over virus probe row

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, Michael Smith and Andrew Tillett

Beijing has accused Scott Morrison of blaming China to deflect domestic "anger" at his handling of the coronavirus outbreak and summer bushfires, in its first direct criticism of an Australian leader in two years as tensions over a mooted probe into the pandemic escalate. The Communist Party's mouthpiece, the People's Daily, published a comment piece on Tuesday accusing Australian politicians of pandering to the United States and said the push for a global investigation would fail.

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Schools retreat on stand-downs as union tests employer powers

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, David Marin-Guzman

The private school union is pushing a test case that will challenge whether employers have the power to stand down workers due to pandemic restrictions, putting pressure on schools to reinstate staff. The Independent Education Union will head to the Fair Work Commission next week to argue that a downturn in work does not justify Victorian school Ivanhoe Grammar's stand-downs of non-teaching staff under the Fair Work Act.

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Income losses offset by benefits

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Adam Creighton

The Productivity Commission has left the door open to back the government's unprecedented fiscal stimulus, as analysis emerges showing the fall in household income in April has been more than offset by an increase in government benefit payments. In the commission's annual review of industry subsidies, released on Tuesday, chairman Michael Brennan said the government's stimulus measures, which are budgeted to cost about \$214bn, "should not be seen in the same light" as the assistance measures catalogued in the latest update.

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Insurers consider pandemic cover

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Cliona O'Dowd

The Insurance Council of Australia is exploring the possibility of coverage being provided for pandemics in the future, its chief executive Rob Whelan has told a parliamentary inquiry. Appearing before the House of Representatives standing committee on economics, Mr Whelan said the industry body was working with actuarial consultancy Finity to see if it could provide "some level of insurance cover" for future pandemics.

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Coronavirus app data will stay here despite US security laws, Health Minister says

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020

Health Minister Greg Hunt has assured Australians that US authorities will not be able to access data collected by the government's coronavirus tracing app as crossbench senator Jacqui Lambie raised fears the information could be misused. Mr Hunt on Tuesday said he had received advice from Attorney-General Christian Porter's office that protections under Australia's Biosecurity Act would trump any overseas laws.

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Virus fears prompt court fight to free Victorian prisoner

The Age, Other, 28/04/2020

Human rights lawyers are taking the Victorian government to court to force the early release of a prisoner before an outbreak of COVID-19 occurs in a jail. The Fitzroy Legal Service and Human Rights Law Centre have filed a case in the Supreme Court, to be heard on Wednesday, on behalf of a prisoner with multiple medical conditions and who would be vulnerable to the virus.

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GOVERNMENT

Australians in China fear backlash over virus probe call

Australian Financial Review, Other, 29/04/2020, Michael Smith

Peter Logan gets nervous when Australian politicians start taking China to task on the diplomatic stage. The Shanghai-based Australian entrepreneur says there has not been any backlash yet from rising Australian-Sino tensions on his electric vehicle start-up in China.

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Budget impact may be lessened by quicker recovery

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, Phillip Coorey

The federal government is not discounting banking a considerable "saving" on the JobKeeper and JobSeeker packages amid early indications that all the money allocated for the schemes may not be spent due to an economic recovery that is quicker than anticipated. Treasury secretary Steven Kennedy told a parliamentary inquiry into the coronavirus response on Tuesday that there had to date been 540,000 applications from employers for the JobKeeper wage subsidy of \$1500 a fortnight, to support 3.3 million workers.

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Farm boss says there's no sense in picking a fight with China

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, Brad Thompson and Mark Ludlow

Agribusiness leader Mark Allison has urged the Morrison government to focus on Australia's economic recovery and forget about needlessly riling major trading partner China over the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Allison, the managing director of farm supplies and services provider Elders, said the government needed to focus on what was important - the health of Australians and economic recovery - and butt out of geopolitics in the interim.

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Coronavirus: Expert on China quits key position amid rising tensions

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Joe Kelly

The man appointed by the Morrison government to spearhead a revamp of ties with Beijing has quietly resigned his post as diplomatic relations deteriorate and China's ambassador issues new demands for Australia to stop playing "political games" Former federal MP Warwick Smith stepped down several weeks ago as chairman of the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations and is understood to hold concerns about the new body after it replaced the 40-year-old Australia-China Council, of which he was longstanding chairman.

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Rebel schools push classroom comeback

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Rebecca Urban

A powerful network of Victorian private schools has demanded the discretion to reopen campuses in regions largely unaffected by the coronavirus, in a direct challenge to Premier Daniel Andrews's hardline stance on school closures. Ecumenical Schools Australia, which represents 19 mostly regional campuses and more than 17,000 students, called on the state Labor government to endorse schools to conduct their own risk analysis on reopening.

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Coronavirus: Outback urges government to step up

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Sarah Elks

Councils in outback Queensland are pushing for the state and federal governments to spend \$50m on a growing tourism infrastructure program, \$15m of which would go towards building outback tourism infrastructure. Western Queensland, which has struggled through drought for years, is now battling the vanishing of the tourism industry.

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NSW government fast-tracks key projects to boost economy

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, Alexandra Smith

NSW will accelerate the assessment of 24 key projects, including six schools and thousands of homes, in a bid to boost the state's economy and create jobs amid the COVID-19 crisis. Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the projects have the potential to create almost 9500 jobs during and after construction and inject more than \$7.5 billion into the economy.

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Australian manufacturers making 1000 emergency hospital beds a week

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, Jonathan Kearsley

Australian manufacturers are making 1000 emergency hospital beds a week, to bolster state stockpiles and send to neighbouring countries in the fight against coronavirus. The Emergency Relief Bed project is part of the federal government's strategy to boost the country's health response in the hope of easing economic restrictions.

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COVID-19: Suspicions of Wuhan lab bat virus leak raised with Morrison Government in early February

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 28/04/2020, Sharri Markson and Clare Armstrong

Advice to the Morrison government as early as February suggested that COVID-19 may have been an inadvertent leak from a Wuhan laboratory, three senior federal sources have confirmed. The Daily Telegraph can reveal in the early days of the outbreak the probability was initially placed at around 50 per cent that COVID-19 was accidentally released from a bio-containment facility but this was swiftly downgraded to a five per cent chance as more became known about the virus.

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LNP frontbencher Trevor Watts stands down after breaching coronavirus public gathering restrictions

ABC Online, Other, 28/04/2020

Queensland Liberal National MP Trevor Watts has stepped down as shadow police minister after being fined for illegally attending a gathering and breaching strict coronavirus restrictions. Mr Watts, the Member for Toowoomba North, was fined more than \$1,300 for attending the function on Saturday.

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ABC News, ABC News at Noon, 28/04/2020, Ros Childs

Press conference with Health Minister Greg Hunt, Rosebud Respiratory Clinic's Dr Sally Shaw and South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network Chief Executive Elizabeth Deveny in Rosebud, Victoria to give an update on coronavirus. Hunt says testing is critical to Australia's success as the nation.

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Channel 9, Today, 29/04/2020, Karl Stefanovic, Allison Langdon, Alex Cullen and Tracy Vo

Interview with Minister for Aged Care Richard Colbeck. Langdon says five more aged care residents have passed away at the Newmarch House in Sydney.

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Sky News Live, The Kenny Report, 28/04/2020, Chris Kenny

Interview with Dan Tehan, Federal Education Minister. Kelly asks on China's threat to Australia over trade and overseas students.

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Sky News Live, Afternoon Agenda, 28/04/2020, Kieran Gilbert

Press conference with Mark McGowan, WA Premier. McGowan is hoping that schools across WA are preparing for the beginning of term two.

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3AW, Drive, 28/04/2020, Tom Elliott

Interview with Federal Trade, Tourism and Investment Minister Simon Birmingham. Birmingham says they are disappointed by the threats made by Chinese ambassador Cheng Jingye.

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CORPORATE

ANZ, Westpac boards meet to decide raising, dividend fate

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, Sarah Thompson, Anthony Macdonald and Tim Boyd

It's (virtual) board meetings galore for two of the big four banks this week and they've got more on their plate than usual. After NAB's \$3 billion capital raising, all eyes are on what the other major banks will do. Not only do Westpac and ANZ's boards have to dot the i's and cross the t's on imminent interim results releases but they also have to answer one fundamental question: how bad will the COVID-19 fallout be?

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Seven Network freezes agreement pay during pandemic

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, David Marin-Guzman

Seven Network staff have waived pay increases in their enterprise agreement to minimise the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis but have been told job losses will still be necessary. The 1,150 crew and administrative staff voted to receive a \$750 one-off payment instead of a 2 per cent pay rise this year and are among the first agreement-covered staff to back a pay freeze during the lockdown.

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Westpac introduces tighter COVID-19 credit policies

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Joyce Moulakis

Westpac is introducing tighter credit policies during the COVID-19 economic turmoil, including scrapping a more favourable industry policy for accountants and lawyers. An email sent to mortgage brokers, and obtained by The Australian, outlines the changes at Westpac and its subsidiary St George which come into effect this week.

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North Queensland Airports taps Gresham for lender talks

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Bridget Carter

The owner of Cairns and Mackay airports is understood to have hired advisory firm Gresham to assist in negotiations with its lenders, with the airport's revenue under pressure from COVID-19 travel restrictions. The understanding is that Gresham's role centres on whether the asset, which is considered to be effectively closed for business, needs to seek additional funds, and whether these funds would involve debt or equity.

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Wesfarmers offers a glimpse inside the COVID economy

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, John McDuling

Investors feeling disconnected from the world and looking for insights into how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting consumer behaviour would do well to examine industrial conglomerate Wesfarmers' trading update on Tuesday. The \$43 billion ASX-listed giant's missive on COVID-19 provides some clues about which type of businesses might emerge from the outbreak in a stronger position than when they entered it, and which might not survive.

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Worley sheds 3000 jobs as energy companies press pause on projects

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020

ASX-listed engineering services provider Worley has cut 3000 jobs and secured an extra \$465 million in debt to shore up its books, after plunging oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic dented its project pipeline. The \$3.6 billion company, which provides services to the resources and energy sector, told the market on Tuesday it had trimmed its workforce by 5 per cent, from 59,000 employees on January 31 to 56,000 by the end of March, with the bulk of the cuts weathered by teams engaged in field-based work.

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Zoom facing fresh security concerns amid claims FT journo accessed rivals' meetings

WA Today, Other, 28/04/2020, Cara Waters

Security experts are warning businesses that meetings conducted via video conferencing service Zoom could be vulnerable to infiltration by competitors after an Australian journalist reportedly gained access to internal meetings at rival publications. UK-based Australian journalist Mark Di Stefano was reportedly suspended from the Financial Times newspaper after being accused of listening in to sensitive Zoom meetings at a rival publications The Independent and the Evening Standard in London.

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Union fights Qantas in Federal Court over refusal to pay sick leave to stood-down workers

ABC Online, Other, 28/04/2020

The Federal Court of Australia is being urged to declare that Qantas is still responsible for paying sick leave to 25,000 workers who have been stood down during the global coronavirus pandemic. The application, which was filed in the court's Fair Work Division, marks a rapid escalation in the dispute between the Transport Workers' Union (TWU) and the national carrier, which has taken a battering since domestic and international travel restrictions were put in place.

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NRL announces plans for May restart after players punished

Guardian Australia, Other, 29/04/2020, Mike Hytner

The National Rugby League has announced plans to resume play on 28 May with the Grand Final set for 25 October. Following talks with clubs, broadcast partners and other stakeholders, the Australian Rugby League Commission chair, Peter V'landys, said the league would return as a 20-round competition.

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Insurers under fire as rental moratorium causes headaches for landlords

The New Daily, Other, 28/04/2020, Matt Johnson

Insurers have been accused of leaving landlords between “a rock and a hard place” during the coronavirus crisis. Renters experiencing financial hardship because of the coronavirus are temporarily protected from eviction after the states enacted varying degrees of the national cabinet’s intended six-month moratorium.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT

Industry Super defends claims it over-egged early withdrawal losses

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, Michael Roddan

Industry Super Australia has demanded Treasury retract claims the lobby group over-egged the expected losses workers would suffer by drawing down on savings. ISA, which represent 15 union- and-employer-backed industry super funds with \$412 billion under management, was accused of using modelling that dramatically inflated the expected hit to retirement balances that younger superannuation members would suffer if they access their savings early.

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QLD coal expansion, exports deferred amid 'sharply reduced' demand

Australian Financial Review, Other, 28/04/2020, Peter Ker

Coal exports from Queensland could slide over the next two months, with Coronado Global Resources the latest miner to flag reduced shipments amid slumping demand and collapsing prices. Coronado’s warning about reduced exports comes after Stanmore Coal flagged on Monday that customers were deferring contracted coal shipments until later this year, and as Coronado said it would defer an expansion of Queensland’s Curragh mine.

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Debt 'to hit \$100bn', no budget likely

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Michael McKenna

Economists are predicting that Queensland's debt will hit \$100bn within two years, as Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk conceded her government was unlikely to deliver a budget to voters before the October 31 election. Ms Palaszczuk and Treasurer Jackie Trad are instead offering only "an intention" to present some form of "financial statement" of the state's books this year, as the government moves further into debt to cope with the coronavirus pandemic.

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Deluge of capital raisings has only just begun

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, David Rogers

A deluge of equity capital raisings since the start of the coronavirus pandemic has so far been easily soaked up by investors amid expectations of a V-shaped economic recovery. Macquarie's Australian equity strategist Matthew Brooks counted 35 announced capital raisings over \$25m between March 18 and April 27, with a total value of \$15.4bn.

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Urgent access to super will cost funds bargains

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, John Collett

More than 456,000 people have requested access to \$3.8 billion of their super funds under the federal government's coronavirus hardship early release scheme. It is not just those withdrawing up to \$10,000 under the emergency measure, with up to another \$10,000 allowed next financial year, who are turning paper losses into real losses - it could affect all fund members through poorer returns than would otherwise have been achieved if access had not been permitted.

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Australian leaders given two strategies for rebounding from COVID-19

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020

Maintaining strict lockdowns until June could drive a 50 per cent greater economic boost than if measures were slowly eased a month earlier, under one of two COVID-19 recovery plans presented to the government. University researchers have given government leaders two strategies to recover from the coronavirus pandemic - controlled adaptation with restrictions eased sooner, or elimination, which could keep restrictions in place until June but increase public confidence and economic activity.

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Superannuation early withdrawal risks collapsing retirement system

ABC Online, Other, 28/04/2020

Some of the most chilling sights of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia were the long jobless queues, reminiscent of the Great Depression, outside Centrelink offices early last month. The queues no doubt helped galvanise the Federal Government to do something quickly to help those facing life on the dole.

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ABC, 7:30, 28/04/2020, Leigh Sales

The covid-19 pandemic has revealed Australia's heavy reliance on other countries for essential goods, like medical supplies. A confidential report prepared for the Defence Department a year ago has predicted it would only take three months for essential services to break down if a major crisis halted global supply chains.

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COMMUNITY

Businesses open, but coronavirus crackdown has customers 'nervous', traders say

ABC Online, Other, 29/04/2020

Struggling small businesses in Tasmania are calling for clearer messaging from the State Government, saying there is no point trading if customers are too nervous to leave home. Business owners are frustrated people may not be getting the message that if businesses are legally open, it is okay for the public to use them.

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Coles, Woolworths ease coronavirus restrictions on toilet paper and other essentials

ABC Online, Other, 28/04/2020

Toilet paper limits forced by coronavirus-fuelled hoarding have been lifted by Coles, with fellow supermarket chain Woolworths also planning to ease restrictions. Starting on Tuesday, Coles customers were able to purchase as many packets of toilet paper and paper towels as they wanted.

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Mental health concerns flagged for mine workers on gruelling COVID-19 rosters

ABC Online, Other, 28/04/2020

Australia's second-biggest gold miner has warned the industry to be on "red alert" for fatigue and mental health issues among workers after the introduction of longer rosters. Northern Star Resources was among the first of Australia's major mining companies to introduce a new work schedule of two weeks on and two weeks off in late March.

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Sydney joins Cannes, Berlin, Sundance for virtual film festival

WA Today, Other, 28/04/2020, Karl Quinn

Some of the world's biggest film festivals, including Sydney's, will join forces to host a 10-day virtual programme on YouTube from May 29. We Are One: A Global Film Festival is the brainchild of New York's Tribeca Film Festival.

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Build public housing for 30,000 to boost Australia's post-crisis economy, Acoss says

Guardian Australia, Other, 29/04/2020, Daniel Hurst

Australia should launch an ambitious program to build public housing for 30,000 families and individuals to boost the post-crisis economic recovery and reduce homelessness, the Australian Council of Social Service has said. While business has renewed its calls for more flexible workplace relations laws and corporate tax cuts on the other side of the Covid-19 crisis, Acoss is warning against any sudden "snap back" to old economic and social policies, saying it could harm the recovery.

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Coronavirus mental health toll: Australians up to five times more depressed, stressed or anxious

The New Daily, Other, 28/04/2020

Australians are suffering worse mental health as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. A Swinburne University survey released on Tuesday says people reported being depressed, stressed or anxious up to five times more than they were before the outbreak.

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AGENCIES & SERVICE PROVIDERS

Coronavirus Australia: AFP on trail of trace app hoaxers

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Richard Ferguson

Hoaxers who tried to frighten users of the COVIDSafe contact-tracing app through fake texts have been told to be "afraid of the law" and could face up to five years in jail. The Australian Federal Police is investigating the texts, which told COVIDSafe users that they had been caught breaking lockdown rules.

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'Crying on the phone': Flu shot shortage hits amid supply breakdown

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, Aisha Dow

Doctors' groups say it is unacceptable that they are being forced to ration flu vaccinations as they battle a severe nationwide shortage caused by distribution failures and record demand. The federal government urged all Australians to arrange to have their flu shots in April, but many general practitioners say they have only been given enough vaccinations to immunise a fraction of their patients, and have waiting lists hundreds of people long.

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Taiwan pushes Australia to back World Health Organisation tilt

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, Eryk Bagshaw

Taiwan has called on Australia to back its campaign to join the World Health Organisation, despite China's objections, arguing it has much to teach the world about tackling coronavirus. Taiwan's Health Minister Chen Shih-chung said Taiwan's exclusion from the WHO on the direction of the Chinese Communist Party was no longer tenable after demonstrating the country had suppressed the virus.

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Queenslanders urged to halt the hit of another killer virus

The Courier Mail, Other, 29/04/2020, Jackie Sinnerton

Queenslanders are at risk of coming out of one deadly health crisis and going into another, the state's top doctor has warned, as the uptake in flu vaccinations has reduced by up to 30 per cent. As COVID-19 restrictions start to ease, the Australian Medical Association Queensland chief has warned there has been a drop in people getting the flu shot and this could spark a potentially deadly influenza season.

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Global coronavirus distancing, PPE rules for health workers insufficient, review finds

ABC Online, Other, 28/04/2020

World Health Organisation guidelines on social distancing in hospitals and other healthcare facilities are based on poor, outdated evidence, a landmark Australian and US scientific review has found. The global health agency advises medical staff that they do not need any personal protective equipment (PPE) if they maintain at least 1 metre's distance from a COVID-19 patient while performing triage, but staff should offer the patient a face mask.

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ABC, 7:30, 28/04/2020, Leigh Sales

Pre-recorded interview with Dr Margaret Harris, World Health Organization. Sales says the WHO has faced some scathing criticism over its alleged failure to act quickly during the coronavirus pandemic.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Drive, 28/04/2020, Richard Glover

Interview with Paul Kelly, Deputy Chief Medical Officer. Glover mentions how Health Minister Greg Hunt has expressed his thoughts about Australia winning the fight against COVID-19, stating that only one person has contracted the illness through local transmission in the last day.

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COMMENTARY

Islands in sun bask in virus battle result

Australian Financial Review, Other, 29/04/2020, Jill Margo and Edmund Tadros

Australia and New Zealand have bettered the performance of many nations in the northern hemisphere in their battle against the virus, but the onset of winter will be the final test. As COVID-19 bites deeply into the northern hemisphere, people there are looking enviously towards Australia and New Zealand, wondering how these islands in the sun avoided the worst of it.

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Coronavirus: Beijing unleashes gunslingers

The Australian, Other, 29/04/2020

An independent international inquiry into the coronavirus pandemic would help the world in general, and China in particular. Beijing feels besieged and humiliated, its prestige tarnished. But a mature nation faces its responsibilities, seeks solutions and avoids practices that have caused death, misery and disruption on a vast scale.

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Coronavirus: Official WHO pandemic advice makes a mockery of our restrictions

The Australian, Other, 29/04/2020, Adam Creighton

It's as though premiers are spinning the Wheel of Coronavirus Restrictions to see which ones to ease first: in Brisbane, the needle landed on picnics; on Macquarie Street, it was visits to friends; in Western Australia, 10 people can now attend weddings and funerals. Victorian Premier Dan Andrews hasn't spun the wheel yet.

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Private capital on parade as new corporate battle lines are drawn

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, Glenda Korporaal

Only a few months after the COVID-19 crisis began to hit Australia, it is already clear it will precipitate one of the biggest restructurings of the economy in most Australians' lifetimes, creating a new generation of winners and losers. As Future Fund chairman Peter Costello said this week, there will be some companies that won't make it through the inevitable COVID-19 recession.

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Westpac's King's wise to ease raising fears and absorb virus shock

The Australian, Other, 28/04/2020, John Durie

Westpac chief Peter King learned his craft at the feet of NAB chair Phil Chronican and if Tuesday's numbers are any guide it seems he was a good student. King released impairment charges ahead of next Monday's results and with \$1.6bn in extra provisions for COVID-19, he took double the charge that NAB took on Monday ahead of its \$3.6bn capital raise.

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No snapback: A post-virus economy is going to be different

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, Shane Wright

Nothing is good if your comparison point is the Great Depression. Treasury secretary Steven Kennedy, fronting a Senate inquiry into how the hundreds of billions in government support is being shuffled out the front door, noted on Tuesday that while the jobless rate in the 1930s rose to unprecedented heights, it had occurred over a space of years.

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Why we are willing to be infected with coronavirus to save more lives

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 28/04/2020, Josh Morrison and Sophie Rose

If it could lead to a speedier creation of a vaccine for COVID-19, we are willing - without reservation - to have doctors infect us with the novel coronavirus. Researchers might then see whether a vaccine candidate made any difference.

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Opening Victoria is crucial to coronavirus rebuild

Herald Sun, Other, 28/04/2020, Jeff Kennett

It takes only a week to demolish a house, but then a year or longer to build a new one. A multi-storeyed office or apartment block can take two years or longer. Australia and Victoria are considering how to start the rebuilding process. Be assured it will take a long time and the result will probably be nowhere near like what we left behind in January when we became aware of coronavirus and then started combating its spread.

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Revealed: Shocking impact of China's COVID-19 cover-up

Herald Sun, Other, 28/04/2020, Sarah Blake

The global coronavirus spread could have been reduced by 95 per cent if China had revealed when it first learned the disease was infectious, according to damning new research to be published this week. As international fury builds against the Chinese Communist Party's handling of the pandemic and legal challenges mount against the regime, a News Corp Australia investigation shows the true impact of the cover-up.

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INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

Big powers urged to freeze sanctions on Syria, Iran, Venezuela during virus

nytimes.com, General News, 29/04/2020

Major powers must suspend economic sanctions against countries including Syria, Iran and Venezuela during the coronavirus pandemic which threatens to worsen hunger and suffering for the poor, an international refugee charity said on Tuesday. Jan Egeland, a former U.N. aid chief who now heads the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), said that despite sanctions exemptions for medical and food supplies, aid groups still face hurdles to help vulnerable people during the health crisis.

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Coronavirus: Oxford vaccine effective in monkeys, heading for mass production in India

scmp.com, General News, 29/04/2020, Reuters

A leading candidate for a Covid-19 vaccine has shown promising results in animal trials, and is expected to see mass production in India within months. The Serum Institute of India, the world's largest maker of vaccines by volume, said on Tuesday that it plans this year to produce up to 60 million doses of a potential vaccine developed by the University of Oxford, which is under clinical trial in Britain.

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Coronavirus: UK contact-tracing app 'ready in two to three weeks'

bbc.com, General News, 29/04/2020, Rory Cellan-Jones

Building a coronavirus contact-tracing app that might help the UK emerge from lockdown has been a titanic effort - and it has largely taken place in private. But now the NHS chief responsible has told MPs he hopes the first version will be ready in a fortnight's time.

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Singapore will continue to look after Chinese migrant workers, Vivian tells Beijing foreign minister

straitstimes.com, General News, 29/04/2020, Charmaine Ng

Foreign Affairs Minister Vivian Balakrishnan told his Chinese counterpart, Mr Wang Yi, on Tuesday (April 28) that Singapore will continue to look after the well-being of Chinese migrant workers here, including providing them with the necessary medical care and treatment. Dr Balakrishnan spoke to Mr Wang, China's State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, over the phone, said the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

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