



Australian Government
Department of Health

Chief Medical Officer

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Hunt

I am writing to recommend an extension to the current human biosecurity emergency period regarding 'human coronavirus with pandemic potential' (COVID-19). The current human biosecurity emergency period is scheduled to end on 17 June 2020.

On 18 March 2020, on your advice, the Governor-General declared a human biosecurity emergency in relation to COVID-19 under section 475 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act). This enabled you to determine requirements and issue directions that are necessary to manage the entry, emergence, establishment or spread of COVID-19 in Australian territory.

Under section 476 of the Act, the Governor-General may vary a human biosecurity emergency declaration to extend the human biosecurity emergency period for a period of up to three months on the condition that you are satisfied that:

- (a) the listed human disease (COVID-19) is continuing to pose a severe and immediate threat or is continuing to cause harm to human health on a nationally significant scale; and
- (b) the extension is necessary to prevent or control the entry, emergence, establishment or spread of COVID-19 in Australian territory or a part of Australian territory.

On 7 May 2020, I sought expert medical advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) on these matters to inform your consideration.

s47C, s47E(d)

As at 10:30am, 8 May 2020, there have been 6,913 cases reported in Australia, including 97 deaths. A total of 3,836,215 cases of COVID-19 have been reported globally, including 268,999 deaths. I believe, on the basis of this domestic and international evidence, that COVID-19 is continuing to pose a severe and immediate threat to human health on a nationally significant scale.

s47C, s47E(d)

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s47C, s47E(d)

Other current

determinations made under section 477 of the Act include restrictions on entry to remote communities, additional protections for personal information collected by the COVIDSafe App, prohibitions on price gouging of essential goods (such as personal protective equipment), restrictions on outward travel for Australian citizens and permanent residents, and the closure of retail stores at international airports.

Provided the human biosecurity emergency period is extended until 17 September 2020, these requirements under the emergency declaration will continue to have effect, until such a time that they are no longer deemed appropriate for managing the threat posed by COVID-19 and can be revoked.

In my capacity as Director of Human Biosecurity, I am satisfied that extending the declaration of the human biosecurity emergency period in relation to COVID-19 by a further three months to 17 September 2020 is necessary. An extension will also allow the current determinations to continue and maintain the availability of powers to give effect to clinical recommendations of the AHPPC. I am satisfied this time period is suitable and appropriate to manage the medium and longer term response requirements for COVID-19.

Yours sincerely



Professor Brendan Murphy
Chief Medical Officer
Director of Human Biosecurity

3 May 2020