**COVID UPDATES FOR NSW AND ACT 26 AUGUST 2021**

There have been changes to the lockdown rules in NSW today. Key changes:

* The lockdown in regional NSW has been extended until Friday, September 10;
* From September 13, 5 people can gather outdoors everywhere outside the 12 Greater Sydney LGAs of concern as long as all adults are vaccinated;
* From September 13 in the LGAs of concern a household will be able to exercise for 1 hour outside as long as all adults are vaccinated;
* The Premier indicated that access to additional freedoms will be contingent on each individual getting themselves vaccinated.

Meanwhile, the ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr said a decision on extending the Canberra lockdown beyond September 2 will be made next week.

The details of cases today are:

* **NSW** -   There are concerns about the number of people dying in their own homes. People are being urged to call emergency if they are experiencing challenging COVID symptoms, especially breathing difficulties.
  + **Overall:** 1029 cases of community transmission of COVID in NSW and sadly 3 deaths including the passing of a man in their 30s and a man in his 60s both in their own homes; 116 people are in intensive care, 102 of these are not vaccinated.
* **Greater Sydney:**The Premier indicated that the suburbs of concern remain the same which includes: Merrylands, Granville, Guildford, Greenacre, Auburn, and Blacktown.
* **Western NSW**– 35 cases which remains of “great concern” (including 25 cases in Dubbo, 3 in Orange, 2 in Bathurst; 1 mystery case in Parkes which is concerning; 1 in Mudgee; 1 in Forbes; and 2 in Bourke);
* **Far West** – 6 cases (5 in Wilcannia and 1 in Broken Hill)
* **Central Coast** – 2 cases
* **Illawarra** – 2 in Wollongong
* **Hunter/New England** – 0 cases; this is a great sign.
* *Sewerage detection of COVID:* Tamworth, Brewarrina, **Cooma and Merimbula**. Residents of these communities are particularly encouraged to get tested. The Deputy Premier described this situation as “a tinder box ready to explode”.

* **ACT** – There were 14 new cases bringing the total active cases to 190.
  + The Chief Minister Andrew Barr called the results “very encouraging” and an indication the lockdown is working. He also said that the ACT is well advanced in their planning for vaccinations for 12 to 16 year olds.
  + All 14 have been linked to known clusters and 12 are household contacts of positive cases.
  + Of the 14 new cases, only 1 was confirmed to be infectious in the community and this was for a very small window and is low risk; 13 were confirmed to be in quarantine for their entire infectious period and pose no risk to the community.
  + The number of people in hospital has increased to 9 and sadly one person is in a critical condition. This is an unvaccinated person in their 40s.
  + The Deputy Chief Health Officer noted there were no further vases related to either the disability cluster or Bright Bees Early Learning.
  + There remains 10 locations of known public transmission:
    - Lyneham High School – 41 cases
    - Southern Cross basketball stadium – 34 cases
    - Fiction nightclub – 33 cases
    - Lennock Jaguar dealership – 15 cases
    - Downer Community Centre – 13 case
    - Bright Bees Early Learning Centre, Nicholls – 11 cases
    - Belconnen Basketball stadium – 7 cases
    - Assembly Bar - 4
    - CIT, Reid – 2
    - Gold Creek School – 2