



Thursday 26 March 2020

## Joint Media Statement by Health Consumers Councils across Australia:

Health Consumers Alliance of SA      Health Issues Centre (Vic)  
Health Consumers Queensland      Health Consumers New South Wales  
Health Consumers' Council (WA)      Health Consumers Tasmania  
Health Care Consumers Association (ACT)

### ***Health consumers lead community call for nation-wide lockdown***

A coalition of peak state health consumer groups have called on Australian governments to invoke maximum precautionary measures to halt the exponential growth of COVID-19 infections in Australia, including:

- mass testing
- contact tracing
- closure of all non-essential services
- lockdown of neighbourhoods with infection clusters

According to spokesperson Melissa Fox, CEO of Health Consumers Queensland, "Until now, community health educators and advocates have been careful to echo official government advice on COVID-19 in order to minimise community confusion by referring to a single source of truth".

"The best clinical advice comes from WHO and they have unequivocally advised all governments to *act quickly, act decisively*. We believe it's time for Australia's governments to invoke that principle now".

"We believe this is what the community wants. Academics and health experts are also strongly echoing a need for decisive action now".

"In particular we call for the immediate closure of schools and all non-essential services, the identification of community infection clusters in order to mass test, treat and lockdown neighbourhoods, the strict isolation of people infected and the mandatory quarantining of contacts".

"We also take the view that the vast majority of the Australian community want preventative measures and are now ready to play their part so long as they do not have to reconcile inconsistent messaging (such as to practice social distancing but continue to send children to school, use public transport, vote in upcoming council elections and queue for hours outside Centrelink) and are assisted with the practical means to adhere to guidance (eg ready access to hand sanitizers).

Organisations and individuals to add their voices to our campaign by contacting us at [consumer@hcq.org.au](mailto:consumer@hcq.org.au)  
For media comment contact Melissa Fox, Health Consumers Queensland (or 0404 882 716)