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## **AMA calls for stricter lockdown of Greater Sydney region**

The AMA is calling on the NSW Government to take the further steps to bring the Greater Sydney COVID-19 Delta outbreak under control, including the closure of all non-essential retail outlets, non-essential services and reviewing limits on how far people can travel from their home.

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said the NSW Government cannot wait any longer.

“The prospect of a significant escalation of case numbers remains real, with regional areas at risk,” Dr Khorshid said.

“The latest COVID-19 infection numbers in Greater Sydney show while the virus is not escalating out of control, current restrictions are not strong enough to bring overall infection numbers down any time soon. Rising unlinked cases and people infectious in the community show we are not ahead of this outbreak. This means there is no end to the lockdown in sight and more needs to be done.

“Allowing non-essential retail stores to remain open not only sends the wrong message to the public, but it also increases the risk of transmission. This is despite the reality that people can access many of the products online. Telling the community not to browse the shops is not enough.

“A range of non-essential workplaces also remain open, which we know from the Victorian experience last year needed to be closed or operated under strict limits in order for its outbreak to be brought under control.

“There is confusion about what is considered essential and non-essential, and the AMA believes it is time for NSW to follow the Victorian approach which gives a clear definition for the public and the business community.

“While we appreciate just how hard things are for people living in Greater Sydney, more delay will simply make things much worse and impose a much bigger toll on the community - with the announcement of additional support for workers and businesses, there is no excuse for further hesitation or delay,” Dr Khorshid said.

NSW AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said the AMA had welcomed the NSW Government decision on 9 July to further tighten COVID-19 restrictions for people living in Greater Sydney, however, the data showed the restrictions were not having the necessary impact.

“An alarming number of new cases each day appear to have been in the community throughout their infectious period – potentially spreading the virus to friends, family, colleagues and other people in the community,” she said.

“With infection numbers remaining stubbornly high, Sydney is facing the increasing prospect of a long and protracted lockdown and the growing risk of the virus spreading to regional areas.

“At the moment when people need to leave home to exercise or go shopping, they are allowed to travel 10km, we believe 5km would be a more effective restriction,” Dr McMullen said.

16 July 2021

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