



COVID-19 Daily Briefing

Tuesday, 24th March 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 March 23 and is reporting that 1,709 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in 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 March 23 and is reporting that there are 102 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in 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>

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/2TqyEFb>

POLITICAL RESPONSE

Coronavirus: Time for us to summon the Anzac spirit

The Australian, Other, 24/03/2020, Scott Morrison

We gather today at a time of great challenge for our nation, and indeed the world. We are a strong nation and a strong people, but in the months ahead this will put us all to the test like at no time since World War II. But together, Australia, we are up to this challenge. The coronavirus that is sweeping the world will continue to change the way we live. But we must not allow it to change who we are as Australians. I know, we all know, that Australians are very concerned at this difficult time.

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Coronavirus: Jackie Trad puts \$4bn into play to boost business survival

The Australian, Other, 24/03/2020, Sarah Elks

The Queensland government will on Tuesday announce a \$4bn health and stimulus package to protect jobs and help businesses through the economic downturn driven by the coronavirus outbreak. After being criticised by the small business lobby and the opposition for acting too slowly, Treasurer Jackie Trad will inject \$2.5bn into the economy to act as a buffer for businesses. Ms Trad will tell small and medium-sized businesses they will not need to pay payroll tax this year.

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Victorians warned of life under lockdown ahead of new statewide coronavirus rules

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Tom Minear

Victorians are being told to cancel backyard barbecues, think twice about trips to the hairdresser and shop online as authorities look to tighten the state's unprecedented lockdown. The national coronavirus cabinet will meet on Tuesday night to consider a second stage of closures after pubs, clubs, gyms, cinemas and churches were all forced to close for the first time in history on Monday.

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Parliament passes 'most significant measures since wartime'

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg says the package of economic measures passed by the parliament tonight were "the most significant to support the Australian community and the Australian economy since wartime". Much needed cash will be released to more than 6.5 million Australian's struggling due to the economic havoc wreaked by the coronavirus.

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History shows virus could be 'catastrophic' for Indigenous communities

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has announced strict measures to protect "sensitive" remote Indigenous communities from a potential COVID-19 outbreak, banning all non-essential travel to and from remote areas under the Biosecurity Act. Policy makers didn't have to look too far into the history books to understand why these precautions were so urgently needed.

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Younger people critically ill with coronavirus in Sydney hospitals

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

Patients in their 40s and 50s are among those seriously ill in Sydney's COVID-19 intensive care units, increasing fears from health professionals that younger Australians are not heeding the health warnings that could protect them and the most vulnerable. To individuals ignoring public health directives, the plight of these patients and their families is a sobering reminder that the coronavirus does not spare the relatively young, as the NSW government shuts down "non-essential" services and asks parents to keep children at home.

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Coronavirus pandemic forces Queensland to find \$4 billion to save small and medium businesses

ABC Online, Other, 24/03/2020, Josh Bavas

The Queensland Government will extend tax breaks for small to medium-sized businesses in a move to prevent significant job losses in the coming weeks due to the coronavirus pandemic. A new \$4 billion package prepared in response to the crisis will overhaul the State Government's original plan to simply defer payroll tax requirements.

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Sky News Live, First Edition - Early, 24/03/2020, Laura Jayes

Schools will close in Vic after the state government announced school holidays will be advanced due to the coronavirus while students in ACT will start to stay at home and work online. The NSW Government is urging parents to keep their children at home but the Premier says schools will remain open.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 9, Today, 24/03/2020, Karl Stefanovic, Allison Langdon, and Alex Cullen

Interview with Senator Anne Ruston, Federal Minister for Families and Social Services. Stefanovic states thousands are lining up on Centrelink sites, while those who try to go online couldn't access the myGov website.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 23/03/2020, Susannah Carr

The Panama flag MSC Magnifica cruise ship caused confusion and panic today after requesting to land on Fremantle while carrying hundreds of sick passengers. The cruise company denied carrying any infected passengers as doctors warned an influx of such size will cripple WA's hospitals.

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CORPORATE RESPONSE

Start-ups fight to survive COVID-19

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/03/2020, Yolanda Redrup & Paul Smith

Australia's technology start-ups are already feeling the crunch of the COVID-19 economic downturn, with cancelled funding rounds, staff layoffs and founders going without pay, despite stimulus measures designed to help smaller companies. Founders and investors have told The Australian Financial Review that many companies in the previously booming sector have been forced to press pause on rapid expansion plans in favour of a battle to survive.

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Corporate Australia swings the axe hard

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/03/2020, Simon Evans, Phillip Coorey, Jenny Wiggins & John Ke

More than 300,000 people could lose their jobs in the first wave of heavy cost-cutting as corporate Australia desperately attempts to stave off the worsening effects of the coronavirus pandemic and conserve cash, amid unprecedented shutdowns of large parts of the hospitality industry. As companies swing the axe hard, federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg revealed Treasury estimates that up to a million people could receive the \$550 coronavirus supplement which is part of the federal government's stimulus package.

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Media companies assess the damage

The Australian, Other, 24/03/2020, Lilly Vitorovich

The coronavirus fallout continues to wreak havoc in the media industry, as Southern Cross Media reviews the damage and oOh!media scrambles to raise capital. Southern Cross, which operates 80-plus radio stations under the Triple M and Hit Networks brands, requested a trading halt on Monday, just days after outdoor advertising group oOh!media's call for some breathing space.

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'Last resort': Funds urge caution, warn of real cost of \$20,000 super dip

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 23/03/2020

If a 25-year-old takes full advantage of the federal government's offer of early access to their super funds, they could lose between \$58,000 and \$84,800 in retirement savings by the time they reach retirement age, according to modelling by the sector. Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on Sunday that some people who lose their job or more than 20 per cent of their income as a result of the coronavirus pandemic would be allowed to pull money from their superannuation savings, with withdrawals capped at \$10,000 this financial year and a further \$10,000 from July.

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Manufacturers find new life in face of a deadly pandemic

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 23/03/2020

Forgotten remnants of Australia's manufacturing past are being drafted into the front line of the war against COVID-19 to help hospital emergency departments and intensive care units stockpile surgical masks and ventilator machines. In the tiny northern Victorian town of Lemnos, named after the Aegean island to which ANZAC soldiers were evacuated from the trenches of Gallipoli, Australia's only manufacturer of surgical masks has ramped up production to try to meet an increasingly desperate demand.

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'Incredibly challenging': Travel shutdown uncertainty for Airbnb

WA Today, Other, 24/03/2020, Emma Koehn

Global and national travel shutdowns as a result of COVID-19 have left Airbnb hosts and customers at a loss while users of the accommodation platform call for guidance ahead of the school holidays. "Understandably, people are asking for refunds," Airbnb host and founder of Tashi Travel, Macartan Gaughan, said.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT

Wall St mixed, ASX futures point to higher open

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/03/2020, Timothy Moore

Australian shares are poised to open higher. Wall Street was mixed in afternoon trade. ASX futures up 149 points or 3.3% to 4632 near 4.30am AEDT. The local currency was trading just below the US58 mark. Shares on Wall Street were mixed at about 1.30pm New York time. While encouraged by further moves by the US central bank to stabilise financial markets, investors await news of a fiscal stimulus package from Washington.

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IMF forecasts 2020 global recession, recovery in 2021

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/03/2020, Timothy Moore

The global economy will contract this year, International Monetary Fund managing director Kristalina Georgieva said in a statement after a call with G20 finance ministers and central bankers. She did not provide a specific forecast. Dr Georgieva said the economic outlook for the world economy for 2020 "is negativea recession at least as bad as during the global financial crisis or worse. But we expect recovery in 2021".

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Forecasts pulled amid virus uncertainty

The Australian, Other, 24/03/2020, Paul Garvey

Dozens more companies have slashed their earnings guidance or pulled it altogether as investors and directors struggle to grasp the full impact of the coronavirus. No fewer than 40 companies made coronavirus-related announcements to the ASX on Monday, almost doubling the number of profit revisions issued in the previous two weeks, as the stockmarket suffered another eye-watering fall.

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Tax holiday first stage of Queensland's \$4 billion rescue package

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

Queensland businesses will have their payroll tax waived for the next three months as part of a \$4 billion rescue package to be unveiled by the state government on Tuesday. Queensland's economy has been brought to its knees by the coronavirus outbreak, with thousands of workers losing their jobs after "stage one" restrictions were implemented from noon on Monday.

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When it comes to unemployment in Australia, definitions have been broken

Guardian Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Greg Jericho

The coronavirus is about to destroy the scale of economic data. What we was considered a "bad case" scenario or even indicative of times requiring stimulus no longer even computes. So quickly are things turning we almost need a new language to explain it. One of the most common aphorisms among those dealing with data is that "the trend is your friend". It is a nice way to note that generally when you see data such as the unemployment rate jumping around, the trend, which is essentially an averaged representation of the data, helps you see through the noise.

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COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Random acts of kindness as uncertainty remains over virus lockdown

WA Today, Other, 24/03/2020, Cara Waters

"They are going to have to drag me out of here kicking and screaming," warns Cherrie Miriklis-Pavlou, the owner of Vasette Flowers in Fitzroy. Ms Miriklis-Pavlou first opened her florist store 30 years ago and said it has been a "devastating" week for the business but she is relieved she doesn't have to immediately shut her doors as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

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Coronavirus panic buying takes root at nurseries selling fruit and vegetable plants and seeds

ABC Online, Other, 24/03/2020, Tony Briscoe & Rachel Carbonell

First it was the panic buying of toilet rolls, then staples like rice, pasta and meat now it's spread to the nursery industry as demand for edible plants and seeds heats up due to coronavirus. Andrew Clarke runs a nursery south of Hobart and said he had never seen anything like the past few days in 30 years of selling, growing and advising about plants.

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AGENCY RESPONSE

'The pandemic is accelerating': WHO

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/03/2020, Timothy Moore

The coronavirus outbreak has reached a new level and "aggressive" tactics are required to combat it, the head of the World Health Organisation said. "More than 300,000 cases of #COVID19 have now been reported to WHO, from almost every country in the world.

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Q+A: Australia will change coronavirus testing criteria, says medical officer Paul Kelly, as Dr Norman Swan slams slow response

ABC Online, Other, 24/03/2020, Paul Johnson

Australia's deputy chief medical officer Paul Kelly announced on Q+A that new protocols determining who can be tested for COVID-19 will be announced in the coming days. Monday's episode of Q+A was dedicated to discussing the coronavirus crisis and featured the ABC's Doctor Norman Swan, Australia's deputy chief medical officer, Professor Paul Kelly, and leading infectious diseases expert Professor Sharon Lewin.

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Rapid Covid-19 testing kits receive urgent approval from Australian regulator

Guardian Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Michael McGowan & Christopher Knaus

Australian regulators have urgently approved rapid Covid-19 testing kits that allow doctors to screen patients for the virus within 15 minutes at clinics and hospitals. After the Guardian revealed last week that a number of companies were seeking to supply a rapid testing kit for the virus into the Australian market, the Therapeutic Goods Administration has granted four approvals to companies to sell the product locally.

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'Everyone will be contaminated': prisons face strict coronavirus controls

Guardian Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Hannah Summers

Prisons around the world can expect "huge mortality rates" from Covid-19 unless they take immediate action including screening for the disease, the World Health Organization has warned. All visitors to prisons along with staff and new admissions should be subject to airport-style temperature testing and health assessments at point of entry, the agency has recommended under new guidelines published today.

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Medicare coverage boost for telehealth

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 24/03/2020

Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt has agreed to expand access to Medicare-funded telehealth, including for mental health, after practitioners complained that restrictions were putting them and their patients at risk. Mr Hunt said the government was working on a plan to enable all patients to be able to access Medicare-funded online or telephone consultations "for all patients, with or without COVID-19, to see any general practitioner, medical specialist, mental health or allied health professional during the COVID-19 health emergency.

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COMMENTARY

Big business helps maintain the nation's fabric

Australian Financial Review, Other, 24/03/2020

In the era of complacency, big business equalled big banks that were hauled before a royal commission for ripping off their customers and that were selectively taxed because "no one likes you". Before the appearance of physical dole queues for the first time in three decades, big energy companies were threatened with big stick break-up and export controls.

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Opinion: China must be held to account for global pandemic

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Pauline Hanson

When the dust settles, Australia needs a serious rethink of how we progress the growth of our nation and pay back what will likely be \$1 trillion of debt. The coronavirus may well be the excuse for a global economic collapse, but the course set by consecutive governments and a host of prime ministers here in Australia left us teetering on the verge of a recession years ago.

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Ann Wason Moore: We need to close all schools

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 24/03/2020, Ann Wason Moore

We're all in this together. Except we're not ... because our children are at school. And our teachers are ready to strike. Well, Queensland children are at school - and Queensland teachers are ready to walk off the job. Meanwhile, Victorian kids are about to be sent home and while NSW schools are technically open, they are functionally closed.

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We're running out of time to use Endgame C to drive coronavirus infections down to zero

The Conversation, Other, 24/03/2020, John Daley & Jonathan Nolan

The New South Wales and Victorian governments showed foresight on Sunday by announcing a shut-down of all non-essential activity. On Saturday we described this strategy on Saturday as Endgame C with the goal to drive new infections down to zero. But after meeting Prime Minister Scott Morrison last night, the two states backtracked and for now will only close pubs, clubs, cinemas, nightclubs, and restaurants. Schools will be closed in Victoria and the ACT, and parents will be encouraged to keep their children home in NSW.

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INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

Coronavirus: PM announcing strict new curbs on life in UK

bbc.com, General News, 24/03/2020

The prime minister is announcing strict new curbs on life in the UK to tackle the spread of coronavirus. From this evening people must stay at home except for shopping for basic necessities, daily exercise, any medical need and travelling to and from essential work.

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Exclusive: Elite Hackers Target WHO as Coronavirus Cyberattacks Spike

nytimes.com, General News, 24/03/2020

Elite hackers tried to break into the World Health Organization earlier this month, sources told Reuters, part of what a senior agency official said was a more than two-fold increase in cyberattacks. WHO Chief Information Security Officer Flavio Aggio said the identity of the hackers was unclear, but the effort was unsuccessful.

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Amazon teams up with Bill Gates-backed group to deliver coronavirus test kits

nytimes.com, General News, 24/03/2020

Amazon.com Inc is partnering with a research program funded by Bill Gates to pick up and deliver coronavirus test kits in Seattle, the e-commerce giant said on Monday. The Seattle Coronavirus Assessment Network, a group of medical, public health and research organizations, is collecting nasal swabs from a sample of people across King County and Seattle to learn how the infection is spreading in the areas.

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1,000 Inmates will be released from N.J. jails to curb coronavirus risk

nytimes.com, General News, 24/03/2020, Tracey Tully

No other state is thought to have taken such sweeping action to reduce its jail population in response to the pandemic. As the number of coronavirus cases in detention centers mount, New Jersey will begin to release as many as 1,000 people from its jails on Tuesday in what is believed to be the nation's broadest statewide effort to address the risks of the highly contagious virus spreading among the incarcerated.

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Coronavirus: Africa braced for more cases with next two weeks 'extremely critical'

scmp.com, General News, 24/03/2020

As dozens of nations report new infections, officials warn continent is 'in the morning of the Covid-19 outbreak' Experts fear fragile health care systems could be overwhelmed and warn people not to be complacent in virus fight African countries are bracing for a potential jump in coronavirus cases in the coming days after dozens of nations reported more infections, including local transmission.

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HK to bar entry for most non-residents

straitstimes.com, General News, 24/03/2020, Claire Huang

Most non-residents, including tourists, will be banned from entering Hong Kong for 14 days starting tomorrow, following a spike in the number of new coronavirus cases fuelled largely by people returning from overseas. Residents of mainland China, Taiwan and Macau who have recently been overseas will also be barred from entering the city.

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