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Transcript: AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, Network Seven, *Sunrise with Samantha Armytage*, Monday, 27 April 2020

Subject: COVIDSafe tracing app

SAM ARMYTAGE: More than one million Australians have already downloaded and registered for the Government's COVIDSafe tracing app since its release yesterday. The app is designed to help contain the spread of the deadly virus. If downloaded, health authorities will notify you if you've come into contact with someone who has coronavirus. The app uses Bluetooth technology to record when another user comes within 1.5 metres. The Government says there's security in place to protect users, and anyone who tries to illegally access the data faces five years in jail.

Australian Medical Association President, Dr Tony Bartone, joins us now from Melbourne. Doctor, good morning to you. Welcome. How exactly will this app help our health system?

TONY BARTONE: As the Chief Medical Officer said yesterday, it's about as we try to move out of social distancing measures and try to keep the lid on the containment of the spread of COVID-19, it's by speeding up the process of contact tracing and identifying people that you've come into contact with as we move about our society again. That's an important part about keeping the lid on any spread, picking up any new hotspots, limiting that spread immediately, getting in touch with those people that you might be in contact with, that if you become positive to ensure that they get tested, and then limit that spread and their movement through the community in that early phase.

SAM ARMYTAGE: Okay. So, who will access the data? Who will actually be able to get into it? Will it be for doctors and nurses? Say I present at a hospital and I have it, will then they go into mine and then work out who I have been near?

TONY BARTONE: So, this is a really important point. The only people who can access that data is the Chief Health Officer in that State, but only when you are prompted to upload that data if you become positive, or if you're in the contact field of someone who has become positive, and you will receive a phone call from the Chief Health Officer, or his employees in that State you reside in. That's the only people.

SAM ARMYTAGE: Okay. Alright. So, if you're on this app, you may, all of a sudden just get a phone call to say somebody you have been near has it, and you now need to go and be tested?

TONY BARTONE: Correct. So, if your phone pings 15 minutes consecutively within 1.5 metres of a known contact, you will get a phone call, and say please go get tested. And I'm sure you'd want to know that.

SAM ARMYTAGE: Okay. One million people signed up overnight, it sounds like a pretty good start. As we know well by now, we need 40 per cent of the population to be on it for it to work effectively, and then we can start to lift restrictions. Are you confident that 40 per cent of Australians will be happy to do this?

TONY BARTONE: I'm sure that Australians want to do what they can to ensure that we continue to limit the spread of COVID-19. And this is one way that we can lift restrictions

gradually, but sooner than possible than in the past. And it will help everyone get back to their life within time. And my patients will want to do what they can, and I'm sure that obviously other people will do the same.

SAM ARMYTAGE: Okay. Dr Tony Bartone, thank you for your time today.

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