



Parliament of Australia

Hon Tony Smith MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Senator the Hon Scott Ryan
President of the Senate

6 August 2020

Joint Statement

Sitting of Parliament scheduled for Monday 24 August 2020

Yesterday morning we received correspondence from the Prime Minister containing advice from the Acting Chief Medical Officer regarding the sitting of Parliament scheduled for Monday 24 August.

We have provided this advice to the working group that has been meeting to consider how the next sittings can occur as safely as possible.

The advice outlines a requirement by the ACT for isolation or quarantine for 14 days for members and senators attending from Victoria.

We have circulated a copy of the advice to all senators and members. A copy of the advice is attached.

Members and Senators should seek further advice regarding attendance and travel from their Party Whips and from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority and the Department of Finance.

We will have more to say about operations of APH prior to the resumption of Parliament.



Australian Government

Department of Health

Acting Chief Medical Officer

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister
CANBERRA

Dear Prime Minister

Further to my letter dated 16 July 2020, where I provided advice on the resumption of the Australian Parliament, I write to you again with updated advice regarding the proposed resumption of Parliament on 24 August 2020.

I note that this advice and the requests are made acknowledging the independence of the Commonwealth Parliament, the Presiding Officers and individual parliamentarians.

I work very closely with all Chief Health Officers and especially the ACT Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerryn Coleman, on issues affecting the Australian Parliament. We have successfully negotiated three Ministerial visits to Canberra since the Victorian travel restrictions began in July.

The opening of the Australian Parliament, within the context of Victorian having now entered Stage 4 lockdown in Greater Melbourne and Stage 3 for the remainder of the state, leads us into uncharted waters.

The situation in Victoria is not improving at this time. The travel of Members and Senators from Victoria to the ACT at this time presents a significant risk to ACT residents, particularly those who work in Parliament House.

It also presents a significant risk for Members and Senators and their staff from other jurisdictions, with the possibility of seeding into other jurisdictions.

It also presents a risk to those who are themselves vulnerable, those at increased risk if infected with COVID-19.

I am also concerned about the community transmission in other parts of the country, especially Sydney. There is no community transmission that we know of in the ACT at this time but this may also change, as may occur in other parts of the country.

The following applies to Members of Parliament and Senators wishing to attend the next Parliamentary sitting in the coming weeks. Staff members would need to apply for an exemption to enter into the Australian Capital Territory and comply with standard quarantine arrangements.

- My advice is that a 14 day strict period of quarantine is required.
- My preference is that the 14 days quarantine should occur in the ACT as per the ACT guidelines for any visitor arriving from Victoria, however this could also occur in Victoria as long as the strict conditions are adhered to.
- The key elements are:
 - While in home quarantine, nobody from the household can leave the home for any reason and no one is allowed to visit.
 - While in quarantine, Members, Senators and household members should monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19. If symptoms develop, they should arrange to be tested for COVID-19.
 - Members and Senators should undertake COVID-19 PCR test on day 12 of quarantine and await clearance before ceasing quarantine.
- ACT requests a signed declaration as per Notification of Entry developed with ACT Health for Commonwealth Government Ministers.
- ACT requests that the Acting CMO endorse the Notification of Entry for Victorian Parliamentarians, as I did for the Notification of Entry for Commonwealth Government Ministers. I have agreed to this request.

To meet the 14-day quarantine arrangements, these guidelines will need to be communicated to members and senators for their action by this Saturday, 8 August 2020.

I am very happy to discuss this with you further, and mindful of the essential role of the Presiding Officers of the Parliament, also with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate.

Yours sincerely



Professor Paul Kelly
Acting Chief Medical Officer

4 August 2020