

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

26 June 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000384

Question Subject: Surgical masks or equivalent PPE

Question Type: Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

In relation to the use of surgical masks or equivalent PPE by the wider community, particularly in relation to places of gathering such as public transport or large events:

- a. What is the AHPPC's current advice to the community?
- b. What is the evidence base which supports this advice? Please provide any relevant source materials (papers, modelling etc.)

Answer:

- a) Current advice for use of masks by the public in the community can be found at: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-use-of-masks-by-the-public-in-the-community.
- b) The Infection Control Expert Group (ICEG) has supported the advice provided in the document "*Use of masks by the public in the community*" with a comprehensively researched document - "*The use of face masks and respirators in the context of COVID-19*". This document provides supportive evidence including references and can be found at: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-use-of-face-masks-and-respirators-in-the-context-of-covid-19.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

26 June 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000386

Question Subject: Suppression strategy not an eliminations strategy

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

In relation to the comment made by the Victorian Health Minister on ABC Radio National Breakfast on 24 June that “National Cabinet agreed to a suppression strategy not an eliminations strategy”:

- a. When was this decision taken?
- b. Was the decision made based on AHPPC advice?
- c. What materials were relied on in making this decision?

Answer:

- a. The National Cabinet has endorsed a strategy of suppression.

It is a longstanding practice not to disclose information about the operation and business of the Cabinet and its committees, including when the matter went to Cabinet, who attended, and what form of submission was provided, as to do so could potentially reveal the deliberations of the Cabinet, which are confidential.

- b. Yes

- c. Various materials including Australian epidemiology and surveillance data, modelling studies and consideration of strategies being implemented in other comparable countries.