

**MEDIA RELEASE**

29 March, 2020

**Older Australians support Government's "strong advice"  
for vulnerable Australians to remain indoors as far as possible.**

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia today advised all older Australians to heed government advice, announced by the Prime Minister tonight, to stay home to the **maximum extent practicable** and to **take very careful precautions when outside their home.**

COTA Australia Chief Executive, Ian Yates AM, said the Prime Minister's very strong advice for all Australians over 70, all Indigenous Australians over 50 and any Australia over 60 with a chronic illness, to primarily stay in their home was a sensible, measured approach to an evolving situation.

"The Government has most strongly advised everyone over the age of 70 to stay home for their own protection," Mr Yates said.

"We know that older people, and people with underlying health conditions are at greater risk of serious illness because of COVID-19, which means they must limit interactions which could bring them into contact with the virus. It's not worth the risk to ignore this advice

"However, this does not mean that older Australians should shut themselves in their homes and not go outside at all.

"Exercise and fresh air are critical to keeping people healthy, and to mental health and wellbeing.

"With precautions older people should still walk the dog, or go for a walk by themselves, or undertake other regular activities that will help to maintain their muscles and fitness, and enjoy the outdoors in a safe way. They should also continue to shop for essentials where it is not possible for someone else to do this for them, but they should also consider trying out online ordering and home delivery if they have access to the internet.

"However, whenever vulnerable older Australians are outside you must be vigilant about remaining at least a one and half metre distance from others, limiting the surfaces you touch, limiting any touching of your face, and washing your hands regularly – including as soon as you return home."

Mr Yates said the government had also boosted telehealth resources so people can see a doctor online rather than visiting a medical centre. The Government has also delivered funding increases to the Community Visitor Scheme and Meals on Wheels to assist vulnerable and isolated consumers get the emotional and practical support they need.

COTA is providing regular updates for older Australians about COVID-19. Go to:  
[www.cota.org.au/covid19](http://www.cota.org.au/covid19)

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