

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) HEALTH & SAFETY ADVICE

9 March 2020

Background

As part of U3A Kyneton's commitment to our members, the Committee is continuously monitoring the ongoing situation. The following information is provided to all U3A Kyneton members regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Current Situation

As at 9:00 hrs on 8 March 2020, the latest report from Department of Health indicates there are 77 confirmed cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19), including 3 deaths, in Australia. The Government recently stepped up its public warnings and asked individuals and businesses to take steps in preparation for a possible COVID-19 pandemic, converging with the annual winter flu season, over the coming months.

What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can make humans and animals sick. They cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases e.g. pneumonia. COVID-19 reportedly spreads when someone with the illness, coughs or exhales, releasing droplets of infected fluid. Most droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects e.g. desks, tables or telephones. People may catch it by touching contaminated surfaces or objects, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

A person can also catch COVID-19 if they are standing within one metre of a person with COVID-19, by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to the flu and most people infected with it experience mild symptoms and recover.

However, some people may experience more serious illness and require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age e.g. people over 40 years of age seem to be more vulnerable than those under 40 years. People with weakened immune systems and conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease, are also more vulnerable to serious illness. The Department of Health provides the latest medical advice and official reports as well as links to the useful information

How can you reduce your individual risk?

- Wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and warm water (or use an alcohol-based disinfectant) after contact with others, preparing food and using the bathroom
- Minimise face to face contact – consider phone and video conferencing options
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or a flexed elbow
- Avoid touching your face or shaking hands with or hugging others
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Keep your work area clean and use disinfectant wipes
- Do not share food, crockery, cutlery etc.
- Do not share telephones etc.
- Consider flexible arrangements when attending courses either at home or other locations
- Stay informed via the Department of Health and other Health websites (links provided below)
- We are all responsible for the cleanliness and hygiene of shared areas

If you feel unwell:

- *Stay at home: notify the Tutor and do not attend courses*
- *If you feel unwell or exhibit any symptoms, seek medical advice - call your GP first by phone*
- Dept of Health is not recommending use of face mask for the general public unless you are unwell

For further information

Australian Government Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics>

World Health Organisation <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

The National Coronavirus Health Information Line on <https://www.1800-020-080>

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