



CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus: Deputy CMO Paul Kelly says no reason for states to remain closed

One of Australia's top doctors said there is no reason for the domestic borders to remain closed, with many states going days without new COVID-19 cases. But he warned infections will increase when the economy reopens.

Clare Armstrong, Maria Bervanakis, Staff reporters, AP, News Corp Australia Network

May 20, 2020 3:58pm

One of Australia's top doctors said there is no reason for the state borders to remain closed, but warned we will see more COVID-19 cases as the economy starts to reopen.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly said domestic border closures were never part of the national response, but States decided on closures "to protect their own populations".

"At that time we were seeing large numbers of cases starting to develop, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria. And so I can understand why those decisions were made," he said.

"If we look at the situation now, several of those states and territories have not had any cases for the last few days."

"From a medical point of view I can't see why the borders are still closed but, as I said, that's for the states and territories themselves to decide when that time is right for them."

Professor Kelly warned that as the economy starts to open up again, Australia will start to see more cases.

"We have designed a system and strengthened that system to find cases quickly. To minimise the numbers of so-called chains of transmission," he said.

"So someone infecting a couple of others and those infecting a few others and that's how we get our large clusters of cases. As we're minimising that, I believe that the chances are that we will see some cases."