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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TELEVISION INTERVIEW
TODAY SHOW
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SUBJECT: Coronavirus.

KARL STEFANOVIC, HOST: The Government has extended the coronavirus response. Australians are now banned from travelling to South Korea, joining the list with China and Iran- whilst enhanced screening measures are being introduced at airports for people arriving from Italy.

ALLISON LANGDON, HOST: Joining us now Dutton is Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton and Deputy Opposition Leader, Richard Marles. Good morning to you both.

RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY: Morning.

PETER DUTTON, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS: Morning, guys.

LANGDON: Well, Peter if we can go firstly to you; First of all to you this school in Epping that we've just been talking about. 1,200 students- I mean that's such a worry for parents isn't it?

DUTTON: It sure is, Ali. So obviously New South Wales Health, I think, have done a great job and they've each of the states and territory health departments have pretty tried and

tested processes of trying to trace who this individual- who the student may have been in contact with not just in the school environment but at home and within the community otherwise. And it's worked pretty effectively so far to try and limit cases. We've got 59 cases in Australia at the moment so that's a concern. But the expectation is that it will grow beyond that. So we've just got to respond, make sure that people listen to the messages and get all of the advice that they can to keep safe.

STEFANOVIC: You're in Washington D.C. at the moment obviously. And we appreciate you being with us today, on an important day for information. Is there anything you're seeing there that we could be doing here? Is there more of a strengthening of the borders that we should be seeing over the next couple of days?

DUTTON: Well Karl, we're here for the signing of an agreement with the internet companies on trying to keep kids safe online away from child exploitation. But I've had a lot of meetings already where the coronavirus has really dominated the conversation. So, the Americans are concerned obviously as to what they're seeing elsewhere, including in Korea, Italy etcetera. They've got similar approaches at their border to what we have in Australia. So they'll monitor that but they're working through, again the tracing of people. They've had a case within an aged care facility as well and in Washington State, they've had some real concerns. So there they're essentially, I think, at the same point that we are- certainly monitoring what's going on and watching what's happening internationally.

LANGDON: Richard, do you think the government's doing a good job managing the crisis and the fear?

MARLES: I think they are. And the point to make here is that this is something which is well beyond politics. We just need all to be working together to deal with this and I think there are going to be some pretty big decisions that government is going to have to make over the coming weeks and months. And the Attorney-General was right to forecast that we need to, as we've said a lot, make sure that medical advice is at the heart of government decision making and I think it is. And I think- people need to be aware that as a country we are as well placed to deal with this as almost any place in the world. We've got a fantastic health system, we're an island continent. We actually have agency in terms of being able to deal with this in a way that most countries don't. And I'm sure that the government will be making the decisions that it needs to be making to get us through this.

STEFANOVIC: Okay, there are some estimates Peter, you would know that this could wipe

\$27 billion off the economy. How do we not slip into recession? And at a time like this I guess surpluses are a thing that we don't even need to worry about we just need to do we need do.

DUTTON: Well Karl, we've all been pretty clear about the fact that the health of Australians is the first priority and the Prime Minister's spoken about not just the extra support into the health system but all of our agencies. So, in the Department of Home Affairs obviously we're doing a lot of work to look at the impacts and the responses outside of the Health Department. So making sure that we can provide support to the Health Department but making sure that our law enforcement agencies are well prepared, making sure that wherever possible we've got supply chains or that we've got the continuity of essential services and support around masks, sanitiser- all those sorts of issues. So we've been going through all of that planning. But it is a huge issue. It is a big blow to the economy and as the Prime Minister pointed out we want to provide financial support. But I think it's really important to point out that as the doctor before has said and as Dr Brendan Murphy has said we've got to put this into perspective. So going out to a restaurant, you know supporting local businesses is incredibly important at the moment. If people are just staying at home then we are going to see a much bigger impact, a negative impact on the economy than what might otherwise be the case.

LANGDON: I mean Richard, do you accept what some economic experts are saying, is you know, unavoidable which is a recession.

MARLES: Well I'm not sure that was the evidence during the week. I think there is obviously going to be a very significant economic impact. And it's important that the Government has a well targeted and significant stimulus package and they've made it clear that they're working on that and we will approach that in a constructive way and give commentary as that occurs. And if we think that there should be more stimulus, or if there are other areas that need to be dealt with we'll be saying that. But the Government has made clear that they'll do a stimulus package and in the next couple of weeks. Yeah there's obviously going to be a very significant impact on the economy. And it's important that the Government plays its part in trying to make sure that we get through this in an economic sense as well.

STEFANOVIC: Richard you can't really- I don't want to be mean on a Friday- but you can't really bag the Government for not delivering a surplus when Labor hasn't delivered one in nearly 30 years.

MARLES: Well you know Karl, I actually don't think now is a moment for politics so-

STEFANOVIC: That is complete rubbish. I mean you've made it about politics over the last couple of days. Well it is what it is and you've certainly made the economy part of the politics of the situation.

MARLES: Sure. I mean the economy is an area where it's our job to go out there and make commentary about it and where we think that governments can do more or less than we should be saying I was doing.

STEFANOVIC: Well that is all I was doing, is pointing out you haven't delivered surplus in 30 years.

MARLES: And we will give that commentary and we will make those comments as we go along here. But I think the point to make right now is that this is a very significant issue. And that in a very bipartisan way both sides of politics are going to be working to make sure that our country gets through this.

LANGDON: Yeah, I mean you've both seen the images over the last couple of days, of empty supermarket shelves. Richard can I ask you have you stocked up on Labor's you know one ply.

MARLES: My household has a very healthy supply of toilet paper. I wouldn't say we are hoarding just yet. But look, I get the anxiety that people feel out there in relation to this. As far as I'm aware, toilet paper is not the secret antidote to coronavirus. I think wrapping ourselves in it is not going to get us through.

LANGDON: Some have tried.

MARLES: And I'm sure that you'll be out to buy a toilet paper no matter what happens throughout this period.

STEFANOVIC: I know exactly what Peter Dutton has done, you said you're over there on some important mission but you've just got to go to Costco over there to invest in some sort of bidet. Haven't you, Pete. Be honest.

DUTTON: Yeah, I've got the suitcases packed- ready to bring them back, Karl.

STEFANOVIC: Yeah good thanks.

DUTTON: Thanks guys. Thank you.

STEFANOVIC: Thank you, Richard and thank you to Peter Dutton.

ENDS

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.