



**RICHARD MARLES MP
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

ADDRESS TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: VICTORIA

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA**

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2020

***** CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY *****

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

And can I start by thanking the Leader of the Opposition for moving this motion and can I thank the Prime Minister for his words in support of those in Victoria.

In the story of this year, the significance of Victoria having just recorded two consecutive days with zero cases, is hugely important.

On the 30th of July, just 12 weeks ago, Victoria recorded 723 new cases of coronavirus.

On that same day in Great Britain there were 846 new cases.

Today with zero cases in Victoria, we saw yesterday in Great Britain 20,890 new cases of coronavirus recorded.

It speaks to how contagious this virus is. It speaks to how easily this virus can spread if it is not checked.

But it also speaks to the incredible achievement of bringing under control the outbreak of this virus which has occurred in Victoria, over the last few months.

Around the world, there is hardly a precedent for it.

And the credit for that first and foremost goes to the people of Victoria.

In regional Victoria over the last few months, we have been living under stage three restrictions.

For many people in this Chamber, indeed for many people around the country, beyond Victoria, that is an experience that was lived earlier in the year.

But in Melbourne over the last few months, people have been living under stage four restrictions.

And in speaking with colleagues, with friends, with family, I can tell you that enduring the stage four restrictions in Melbourne saw as big a difference between that and stage three as there is between stage three, and nothing.

In my lifetime, I have never witnessed up close such an experience of stress within our society.

People making a decision every night about how they're going to spend that precious single hour outdoors every day. People living under a curfew in Melbourne, in a way which I would never have imagined.

This changed life in every way, including in this place. And the Members of Parliament who you see on the screen behind me speak to them and I want to acknowledge every one of the Victorians who is not here today.

Months on end, not seeing loved ones in aged care facilities. And, as COVID-19 started to work its way through aged care facilities, an utter sense of terror on behalf of grandparents,

on behalf of a father, on behalf of a mother.

For the families of 653 aged care residents they've had the heartbreaking experience of saying goodbye to their loved one in a way that they would never have wished to, in a way that was characterised by loneliness.

In the journey from the dark days of July, to where we are now, there has been a story of leadership.

Yes, there have been mistakes.

And the Victorian Government established a judicial inquiry immediately which is working through those issues as we speak.

But the Victorian Government has also been a source of crystal-clear decisions, at the heart of which has been the very best medical advice, which has guided us from where we were back in July, to where we are right now.

The rhythm of life for Victorians and for Melburnians is defined by great cultural and sporting events.

And the significance of what has occurred in the last 48 hours is that Melburnians can now look forward to the Comedy Festival in March.

To having a beer at the Espy over summer.

To visiting the Vic Market on a Saturday morning once again.

To going to the tennis at the Australian Open at Melbourne Park.

To seeing the Boxing Day Test at the MCG, with a renewed sense of confidence, of hope and of optimism.

ENDS

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.