

### COVID-19: is there an endpoint and what does it look like?

As Australia's COVID-19 epidemic shows signs of *flattening* the country is faced with a set of tensions that seek to balance public health measures to contain the virus and economic interventions to keep the economy moving. The only certainty is that customised COVID-19 measures will be required until a safe and affordable vaccine is available.

Now is the moment for Australia to reflect on what policy initiatives are best suited to containing the virus and, simultaneously, stimulating the economy in preparation for the post pandemic period.

To inform policy development, the Commonwealth engaged the Doherty Institute to model various scenarios based on specific public health responses to COVID-19. This webinar will include one of the authors of the Doherty Institute Report, Damien Brown, describing the modelling provided to the Commonwealth, and Dr Rob Grenfell, Director of the CSIRO's Health and Biosecurity Business Unit, reflecting upon the public health policy levers open to governments to mitigate the harms of COVID-19.

Key questions include:

- Is there a one size fits all policy available to governments to contain the epidemic, or will governments be left with no alternative other than to judiciously monitor the epidemic and impulsively revoke and invoke policies to avoid our system being overwhelmed by COVID-19?
- Are the current shutdowns the right solution and, if not, what is the *sweet spot* to prevent viral rebound and space COVID-19 cases out so healthcare system can cope?
- Is eradication possible and, if so, how long would eradication take to achieve?
- Is Australia's diagnostic framework sufficient to capture asymptomatic cases?
- If a treatment is discovered, and self-testing becomes available would these be effective ways to mitigate the harms of COVID-19?
- Does the HIV response (a virus without a cure or vaccine, but with effective treatments) provide a template for managing COVID-19 in the absence of a vaccine?

#### Details

2:00pm – 3:00pm, Monday 20 April 2020

Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96479320529>

#### Facilitator

Adj A/Prof Darryl O'Donnell, AFAO CEO

## **Presenters**

### **Dr Rob Grenfell**

Rob is the Director of CSIRO's Health and Biosecurity Business Unit and leads a broad portfolio covering Nutrition, eHealth and Diagnostics and Biosecurity from weeds to Ebola. Rob has broad ranging public health experience including: National Medical Director at BUPA Australia New Zealand, National Director Cardiovascular Health at the Heart Foundation, Strategic Health Advisor to Parks Victoria, Senior Medical Advisor at the Department of Health Victoria and Physician in charge of travel health BHP

### **Damien Brown**

Damien Brown is a public health medicine registrar, currently working at The Doherty Institute in Melbourne. His background is in clinical medicine, having spent much of the last decade as an emergency and tropical medicine doctor with Medecins Sans Frontieres, and with the Royal Flying Doctor Service in remote Australia.