

How to beat the coronavirus and not shoot your economy in the foot

By Andrew Warrilow

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Forward thinking and a proactive government plan is in need to save our economy from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, writes [Andrew Warrilow](#)

WHEN IT COMES to beating epidemics, speed and taking decisive action are what get results. Pathogens such as viruses spread rapidly through the community and the increase in cases can be exponential. So far with the coronavirus, the countries which have done the best to reduce the spread of the disease have been [Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea and Taiwan](#).

All these countries acted swiftly to test suspected cases, confirm a diagnosis and commence contact tracing. Even China, slow to act initially, delivered a [belated yet aggressive response](#) which produced impressive results.

'We had PLENTY of warning Infection expert unloads on Scott Morrison and his government for not closing Australia's borders MONTHS ago to stop the spread of the coronavirus Bill Bowtell unloads on Scott Morrison for COVID-19 response
<https://t.co/Q42dbDZrjG>

— lynlinking (@lynlinking) [March 16, 2020](#)

Yet, a key feature of pandemics in an age of jet travel is that unless a vaccine can be supplied, infections will continue until there is enough herd immunity in the population for spread to halt. This can happen quickly. Good management, therefore, is not about stopping the spread of the illness but slowing it down to a level where it does not cause the [hospital system to collapse](#).

There are important economic considerations, too, evidenced by the impact of the pandemic [on stock markets worldwide](#). People will need to come back to a job once the crisis is over. Companies and the financial system will seize up in the face of mounting debts from bankruptcies. Governments will not have the resources to help communities recover if tax receipts have been crunched.

One of the most important patients to keep alive through the crisis is our economy.

Another consideration, although relatively minor, is the viability of keeping a population used to generous civil liberties in quarantine over an extended period of time. People may obediently self-isolate initially but for how long? This question is particularly relevant for groups which stand to lose less by ignoring quarantine directives such as younger persons. Even the most disciplined of citizens may have a hard time coping in the event of a [Wuhan-style lockdown](#) which lingers for months.

Coronavirus: Preparing, not panicking
<https://t.co/buX45E8QOF>
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— IndependentAustralia (@independentaus) [March 17, 2020](#)

So, is there a way to act early, decisively and still not destroy the economy? There may be. Staggered lockdowns of a single week each month would cut down opportunities for sick persons to spread the illness. It would substantially reduce infection rates. Other weeks each month the economy could operate normally, or as close to normal as possible, which would allow businesses to earn some income and keep people in jobs. Set “quiet weeks” – say, the last week of every month – would allow businesses and governments to plan. Returning freedom for

the rest of the month would help people to cope psychologically.

This system could be implemented on top of standard public health guidelines to quarantine when ill. It is the measure which is called for in the current crisis and needs to be given serious consideration.

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[@JessMillward9](#)
<https://t.co/ry8Hnim0li>
can you verify WHO's advise to no matter what, anyone asking to be tested, they should be? As far as I know, WHO said to TEST ALL SUSPECTED CASES! Logic: If you have symptoms, isolate already, there is no treatment for CoVID if you are tstd +!

— [\[?\] Hamish \[?\]](#) (@hmshlxndr) [March 17, 2020](#)