

OPINION

# The COVID-19 harm we don't talk about

**We are rushing like lemmings off an economic cliff all because of a disease that, for eight out of 10 of us, will mean very little at all. It's time to stop the madness before it's too late, writes Alan Jones.**

Alan Jones, The Daily Telegraph

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Governments may not be saying as much, but they appear to have woken up to the calamitous consequences of lockdowns.

Remember with JobKeeper, everyone got the same benefit, \$1500 a fortnight, even the casual who was on \$200 pre-coronavirus.

This is the mentality that has informed government from the outset. Treat those who don't have the virus and those cases which are mild the same as we treat those at risk.

Lock everything down.

Now they can see the figures which Josh Frydenberg has described as eye-watering.

I would call them vomitous.



 Registered Nurse Kahala Dixon processes COVID-19 swab tests at Bondi Beach. Picture: Getty

Gross debt heading to \$900 billion this financial year, perhaps a trillion and interest over \$16 billion.

When I worked for government, these figures would have been called “rubbery.”

Is the Victorian lockdown going to last only six weeks? Is international travel going to resume? Is tourism going to blossom in the spring?

Victoria is now costing the tourism industry \$146 million a week. The sector has lost \$6 billion in three months.

The construction sector says it will lose about 140,000 jobs over the next two years.

Josh Frydenberg says the return of international travellers, particularly students, will help pay off the debt.

What do they say in that magnificent Australian movie, *The Castle*? “Tell him he’s dreaming!”

You wouldn't put these figures in the pool room!

Mathias Cormann when under challenge on Thursday asked a question in seeming desperation: "What other options were open to the Government ... in the circumstances, what was the alternative?"

Well, to use an overused cliché, this is the elephant in the room.



 Eleanor Smith an ED registered nurse pictured at the Covid-19 testing clinic at Northern Beaches Hospital. Picture: NCA NewsWire / Damian Shaw

From day one, the politicians have followed the health alarmists and the media have swallowed the armageddon lectures of both.

The image of following one another like lemmings is appropriate. Lemmings are little Arctic rodents. There is a popular misconception that they are driven to commit mass suicide when they migrate, by jumping off cliffs.

Economically, that is where we are. The only debate is whether we're looking or have gone over the cliff.

Back to Mathias Cormann. "What was the alternative?"

The figures bear witness to the statement by the Prime Minister when he addressed the nation on March 15.

"It is a more severe condition than the flu, but for the vast majority ... around eight in 10 is our advice, it will be a mild illness and it will pass."

It was Tony Abbott who said that what should have underpinned all our responses to the coronavirus crisis was the extent to which saving lives should or should not take precedence over preserving the economy.



 Treasurer Josh Frydenberg tells how COVID-19 has hit the Government's economic plans. Picture Gary Ramage

As Heather MacDonal from America's Manhattan Institute has said, the "experts" were "deaf to the pleas of law-abiding business owners who saw their life's efforts snuffed out".

Why were the 8 in 10 locked down?

Why were the "mild" 99 per cent of cases treated the same as the "at risk?"

It may not be the popular thing to say, but it is easy to argue that this trillion-dollar bill, and the smashing of whole industries, was the making of governments surrendering to alarmism.

There are 651,000 deaths worldwide from coronavirus, each positive test announced breathlessly as if testing positive means you are about to dive into a coffin. But as I write this, worldwide, there have been 7.4 million communicable disease deaths this year; 4.7 million deaths caused by cancer; 2.8 million deaths caused by smoking.

The death rate in America, which commands massive headlines in order to damage Donald Trump, is 0.045 per cent of the population.

If this is a pandemic, words have lost their meaning.

Last week the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, the refreshingly sensible Dr Nick Coatsworth, was talking about spare capacity with intensive care beds. He said: “In the middle of what we would usually term our flu season, where our intensive care units would often be close to 100 per cent capacity, we still have existing capacity within our system.”

Now, of course, Government would say, shouldn't we have hairs on our chest! Look at the lives we have saved!



📷 Criticised... Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews.  
Picture: Getty

I'm sorry. Geography saved us. We are an island continent and if we had stopped planes and ships earlier (Ruby Princess) and effected appropriate quarantine (Daniel Andrews) we would have saved many more lives.

But how many lives have we lost through people not having elective surgery available to them?

How many lives have been lost through suicide, as people are driven to bankruptcy, unemployment and depression? We do know that last year over 3000 Australians died from intentional self-harm.

Are we seriously going to argue that the response to this so-called pandemic will not add to this disturbing total?

We are told 155 people have died from coronavirus; we are not told their ages. We are not told if they had pre-existing conditions.

Did they die from coronavirus or with it?

So in relation to Mathias Cormann's question, I would say what, apparently, many are afraid to say.

The response to this coronavirus was wrong.

Unless Scott Morrison was wrong, because he said “for ... around eight in 10 ... it will be a mild illness and it will pass”.



Why weren't those eight allowed to get on with their lives — in employment, in productivity, being sensible about their health — and we tip the resources into those described by the Prime Minister as the “more vulnerable ... those in remote communities and those with pre-existing health conditions”.

If our health system cannot separate those at risk from those not at risk, then we should start again.

I was not prepared to buy the alarmism and hysteria from day one and I am not prepared to buy it now.

There is the looming debt bidding to strangle us.

There will be children born today who will still be paying off our debt, our misjudgment, when they are 30.

That should fill us with a sense of shame.

Are we being sucked into something even more disturbing?

There are militant protests on the streets.

Monuments and statues are being knocked down.

Freedom of speech is being destroyed.

people are terrified to speak out and unhinged, snarling, human pit bulls are frightening the tripe out of people everywhere.

And now a virus is ripping the guts out of the economy.

You would be entitled to think there is an agenda out there, comprehensively determined to destroy Western society as we know it.