

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 11 September 2020

Media Release – What’s the border opening plan Gladys?

As some positive news starts to break on regional Victoria with comments made by Acting Deputy Chief Health Officer Allen Cheng, regarding the possibility of regional Victoria “opening up” later next week, Mildura Regional Development have continued to put the pressure on the NSW Government when it comes to the state border closures.

Mildura Regional Development CEO Brett Millington said, “A key component of our regions economy relies on our cross-border relationship with Wentworth Shire Council residents, and for them to not be able to travel freely for day-to-day interactions is having a significant impact on our community, not only financially, but it is now beginning to take a mental toll on people’s livelihoods.”

Geoff Thomson, who is the Chair of Mildura Regional Development, but also owns and operates Thomson Linen Company added, “the state border closure within a cross-border region is adding additional pressures to local businesses who transport goods and services to and from the region and who are already suffering from the implications added from the Victorian industry restrictions. As an organisation that represents regional development, growth and support for business, it’s very important for us (MRD) to push back on Government in the hope of easing these restrictions and having a plan for reopening.

The Mildura region has had no COVID active cases in over 150 days, which is far more than the required period the state is looking at when evaluating the easing of restrictions and moving along its “road-map”.

The tourism industry is one hardest hit, add that with the border closure and you have a range of river users such as paddleboat and houseboat operators who have had to close their doors to suit bureaucracy, Mr Millington said.

He added, “It’s not just businesses who are losing out on this closure, as the warmer months approach and with the possibility of regional Victoria opening up, people will want to be out and about enjoying our wonderful stretch of river albeit by skiing, fishing and swimming and to not be able to do that without a permit and legitimate reason for travelling is beyond ridiculous”.

Mr Millington concluded, “Common sense should prevail and it’s about time Premier Gladys Berejiklian acted on location and the data coming out of these regions alone, rather than assuming we should sit alongside city outcomes.”

Ends.

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