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**Transcript:** AMA Vice President, Dr Chris Moy, Sky News Live, *Summer Agenda with Andrea Crothers*, Wednesday, 6 January 2021

**Subject:** NSW COVID cases, SCG Test, vaccine rollout

**ANDREA CROTHERS:** Returning to the COVID situation now, I'm joined by AMA Vice President Chris Moy. Chris, thanks for your time on Summer Agenda. We'll begin with the situation in New South Wales. We continue to see these low but persistent cases. What's your main take-out from that State's update today?

**CHRIS MOY:** Well, not out of the woods still. I think I've said previously that they haven't squashed it, and they haven't quite squashed it. They've done a good job with their contact tracing and testing, but I think springing up in the western suburbs is always going to be much more difficult in terms of containing it and that's what we're seeing at the moment. So, look, New South Wales needs to be on alert and people do need to get tested, because that's the really critical thing that they can do and obviously, wear their mask and maintain their physical distancing and general hygiene, because it is still a bit of a worry because it hasn't been squashed at this moment in time. But hopefully, the good work so far from the contact tracing can be maintained and they can continue to keep it at bay. But it is still somewhat on edge.

**ANDREA CROTHERS:** Particularly with that alert, I guess, throughout western New South Wales, we did see that there's been no positive results come back thus far, but we haven't heard how many tests. We do know, usually with those regional areas, it can take some time for tests to get back. How concerned should regional New South Wales still be at this stage?

**CHRIS MOY:** Again, it's another worry, isn't it? This is the issue with having had the virus seed into wider Sydney. They've done a fantastic job in that Northern Beaches area, it looks like, but it's the seeding in the rest of the city which is always going to be the concern and that's much harder to contain. They're just holding it at bay at this moment in time and hopefully it will be maintained. But the alternative would be really unfortunate, that Victorian situation, where it has gone into an area where, for example, maybe there may be less understanding about what to do in terms of testing and doing the right thing as far as if you have symptoms, to go get a test. Hopefully that won't be the case, but if it is, then we'll have a problem.

**ANDREA CROTHERS:** Chris, Victoria's new mystery case was potentially caught at the MCG Boxing Day Test match. Should this serve as a warning on the eve of the third Test at the SCG?

**CHRIS MOY:** Well, it reinforces the concerns that the Australian Medical Association has had, you know, right until now, about having the crowds at the Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground. And it's good that the crowds have been reduced, and I understand that they will have very strong COVID-safe plans. But really, the danger periods are going to be when crowds are in the common areas, when they're getting food, when they're in the toilets, when they're walking through corridors. They're the risky areas and so there is concern about that that remains. And the MCG situation is just a reminder of that.

**ANDREA CROTHERS:** Now, Australia's vaccine rollout has been brought forward by two weeks. There's been a lot of criticism, particularly from the Federal Opposition, about the timing, particularly that lag between when the Therapeutic Goods Administration is due to approve the vaccine and then when it gets rolled out. For those who don't know, can you explain a bit about why there is this sort of lag?

**CHRIS MOY:** The first thing is, we've got to make sure that the approval process is maintained. Going through our normal approval process, which is different from what's happened overseas in terms of emergency approval, is really important because maintaining the trust of an individual when their GP comes up to them with the vaccination, that it's gone through everything - the same sort of approval process that they have for any other vaccination - is really important.

After that, there is actually quite a lot to do this properly. I mean, you can already see that within the UK and other areas where they've really had to go in there in an emergency and somewhat panicked situation, there have been sort of foul ups in terms of wastage. There's been problems with people trying to get the right number of doses out of a vial, for example. And really, the logistical problems, for example, of the Pfizer vaccine in terms of the fact that it has to be kept at minus 70, getting it out to areas like an aged care facility are massive. Beyond that, there are huge problems with things like making sure that we go through the normal pre-vaccination checklist and the consent process.

So all these things, if we do this properly, we maintain trust. And it's a really critical aspect of the rollout because I think the community would expect that. But they would also expect that we do this in a really professional way, and I think that is of greater value at the moment in Australia, where we don't have the emergency, than rushing into it and then making mistakes and potentially undermining the trust in the vaccines.

**ANDREA CROTHERS:** Chris Moy, thanks for your time this afternoon.

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