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**SOBERING ECONOMIC FIGURES SHOW NEED TO CONTINUE
 COVID-19 CONTROL MEASURES - AMA**

Today’s national accounts figures highlight the critical role that public health measures have played in protecting Australians from the worst impacts of COVID-19 – from both a health and economic perspective, AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, said.

“The figures paint a sobering picture of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy, with a 7 per cent fall in gross domestic product (GDP),” Dr Khorshid said.

“But they also show that Australia has fared much better than other nations, who were slower to act to contain the virus. The United Kingdom economy has fallen by 20.4 per cent. France, Italy, Canada, Germany and the United States have all seen falls of 9.5 per cent or more.

“The clear message from these numbers is that our economy depends on controlling COVID-19. Australia acted early and decisively to tackle COVID-19, and this strategy is working.

“If we are to avoid the terrible economic impacts seen in other countries, there can be no let-up in efforts to contain the virus.

“While we know some parts of the business sector have been hit hard by restrictions, we cannot assume that the lifting of restrictions will restore our economy.

“To restore economic activity, governments must build community confidence that COVID-19 is under control.

“The National Cabinet’s stated goal of zero community transmission must be actively pursued, with restrictions and other public health measures working together to achieve this.

“In those States and Territories where zero community transmission has been achieved, settings need to ensure that outbreaks can be quickly contained. Governments must not become complacent or give up on those goals, which Australia had largely achieved earlier this year.

“Keeping community transmission low is also critical to protecting our most vulnerable. We are seeing significant deaths among residents in aged care facilities. While governments and facilities can implement more measures to protect these residents, the best way to keep COVID-19 out of these settings is by keeping it out of the community.

“Far too many healthcare workers have contracted COVID-19. We must continue to protect our health system, and commit to zero healthcare workers death from this virus.

“It is critical that Government maintains support through programs such as JobKeeper, as well as the JobSeeker coronavirus supplement.”

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