

## Podcast 123 - Surviving the Coronavirus - Second Lockdown in Melbourne

by Rob McCormack - Tuesday, September 29, 2020

<https://slowenglish.info/podcast-123-surviving-the-coronavirus-second-lockdown-in-melbourne/>

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

*Podcast Number 123 – Surviving the Coronavirus – Second Lockdown in Melbourne*

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Hi,

In Podcast 120 (<https://slowenglish.info/podcast-120-surviving-the-coronavirus-lockdown/>), I talked about the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic here in Australia, and in my home state of Victoria in particular. At the time of publishing that podcast (June the 4<sup>th</sup>), we had successfully flattened the curve of infections and it appeared that Australia was not going to have the high numbers of infections and deaths which places such as Europe, Brazil and the USA have experienced. I also said, in closing podcast 120, that only time will tell if we can continue to keep the coronavirus at bay. Unfortunately, here in my state of Victoria and Melbourne in particular, we have experienced a second and more dangerous wave of coronavirus. In this podcast, I would like to tell you about my experience of this second wave so far.

**3 WAYS TO  
STAY SAFE WHILE  
YOU'RE OUT**



If you have symptoms  
stay home



Wash your  
hands regularly



Stay 1.5 metres  
away from others

**STAYING  
APART | KEEPS  
US | TOGETHER**

**Find out where to get tested,  
visit [vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS](https://vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS)**

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In early June of this year, I think it is true to say that nearly all Australians, me included, had the view that Australia had overcome the first wave of the virus very successfully. We knew that we would have to keep doing all the social distancing and handwashing measures, but overall we were very optimistic. Indeed, at the time of writing this podcast (September the 28<sup>th</sup>), that has proved to be right, with the exception of my state of Victoria.

In Victoria it has been a different story. We have had a significant wave of virus infections, peaking at 725 new cases on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August. Thankfully, as I write (September the 28<sup>th</sup>), our daily number of new cases here in Victoria has once more flattened, down to only 5 new cases per day. However this second wave has been devastating for our community. In podcast 120 in early June, I reported that there were 102 deaths Australia wide since the start of the pandemic, with Victoria having 19 deaths at that stage. However, as at September the 28<sup>th</sup>, this has grown to 875 deaths Australia wide. The vast bulk of all coronavirus deaths have been in Victoria, which now has had 787 deaths, with 627 of these occurring in aged care facilities. Once the coronavirus found its way into aged care facilities, where the residents are the most vulnerable, the death toll was bound to rise substantially. Our state government has had to put all of Melbourne and its surrounding areas once more into very strict lockdown, much stricter than for the first wave. It's been really tough and our economy has been very badly affected. Despite that, our Victorian state Premier has said many times that we must first deal with the health crisis before we can deal with the economic crisis. Most Victorians agree with that approach.

The second lockdown started for all of Melbourne on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July, after our daily number of new cases climbed to 191 new cases on that day. This second lockdown has been designed to drastically reduce movement of the population and to keep us apart whenever possible. For example, we have been under a curfew from 8pm until 5am each night, meaning that we must stay at home during these hours unless you have permission to travel for work or emergency purposes. Most industries are shut down or are working with reduced numbers of workers. For example, large scale construction sites have been limited to 25% of their normal workforce. Of course, there are exceptions including supermarkets, chemists, health care providers, a range of workers who supply the supermarkets, emergency workers and many others. Schools and retail shops have been closed, with restaurants and cafes only being allowed to offer a takeaway service. Those who could work from home were told that they must work from home. During the day, Melbournians (unless exempt) must stay home, although it is possible to leave for certain reasons. The permitted reasons are shopping for food, for medical reasons, to exercise outside up to 1 hour per day and to attend a permitted workplace. Importantly, although you are allowed to visit the supermarket, you can only do this within 5 km from your home, and only one person per household can go once per day. Likewise, when doing exercise outside, it must be within 5 km from your home. As a further measure, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July all Victorians have been required to wear a mask whenever they leave their home.

(For the latest and up-to-date restrictions in Victoria, please refer to <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>)

My wife and I are retired, so the strict lockdown has not been too difficult. We have all our groceries delivered, and if we need to buy something not food-related (for example clothes), we can buy it online and have it delivered. It's been really hard that we can't meet with our family and friends. However, we have used online meeting software to catch up with many of them.

It is interesting, and tragic, that Victoria has suffered this second wave of infections and deaths, while other areas of Australia have not. The cause has been the hotel quarantine program in Melbourne. Under this program, all returning overseas travellers were taken from the airport to one of several hotels in the city centre, where they were confined to their rooms for 14 days, before being able to return to their homes. Apparently, mistakes were made in the way it was set up and operated. Unfortunately, many of these returning travellers had the coronavirus and it would seem that some of those supervising them somehow caught the virus and transferred it into the community. From there it spread rapidly, including into aged care facilities. An inquiry has been set up by the state government to find out how this happened. Once their investigations are finished in November, they will give their findings to the government. It is expected that the lessons learned about those mistakes will help make sure that such mistakes are never made again.

While it seems that we have defeated this second wave for now, the restrictions will be very slowly removed, to ensure that Victoria can keep its number of new cases very low as the pandemic continues and until a vaccine is found. The current plan is that we can lift many of the restrictions by late October. I am looking forward to that as it means I will be able ride my motorcycle again and once more meet up with family and friends. While I feel very confident that our current plan is working, there might still be a third wave of the virus – we will see how things go. I will be obeying the social distancing rules. Until a vaccine arrives, that is what we all must do.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at [rob@slowenglish.info](mailto:rob@slowenglish.info). I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 126]

### Vocabulary

affected = when something causes a change in something else

apart = away from one another

appeared = how something looked

approach = (here) a way of doing something

at bay = stopped, to keep something away from you

bound = (here) it is sure to happen

catch up with = to meet and spend time with someone

certain = (here) particular

confident = to be sure that something will happen

confined = to be kept in one place and you cannot leave

construction sites = the place where a building is being built

crisis = when things have gone very wrong, when everyone is in danger

curfew = when you are not allowed to leave your home

curve = a shape like a hill or mountain

dangerous = when you can get hurt, sick or die

death toll = the number of people who die

defeated = beaten

designed = (here) made a certain way

devastating = very, very bad

drastically reduce = to make something much smaller in size or number

economic = to do with money and business

emergency purposes = when there is an urgent need to do something

exceptions = things that are different from normal

exempt = when a rule does not apply to you

experienced = (here) when something has happened to you or someone else

facilities = buildings or equipment which make it easier to do something

findings = the things you find when you do an investigation or inquiry

flattened = make a round curve shape become more like a straight line

groceries delivered = brought to your house

included = when something or someone is put together with others

industries = groups of people and businesses which make a product or service

infections = sickness caught from another person

inquiry = when someone asks a lot of questions to find out what happened

investigations = when you find out what happened

large scale = big in size

limited = (here) when something cannot go any higher

measures = (here) things to do in order to prevent something from happening

medical = to do with your body and your health

not food-related = not to do with food

obeying = doing as you are told, following the rules

optimistic = to believe that something will turn out well

overcome = to prevent

pandemic = when a sickness is caught by many, many people

peaking = reaching the highest

permission = when someone gives you the right to do something

permitted = allowed

population = all of the people who live in a place

program = a group of activities together

providers = people or groups who give or sell things to others

publishing = when a book, magazine or blog is given to a large number of people

required = (here) must

residents = people who live in a place

restrictions = when you are not allowed to do certain things

retail shops = shops that sell to the public

retired = when you are no longer working, usually because you are 65 years or older

significant = (here) large, important

social distancing = keeping apart from other people (by 1.5m) to prevent infection

spread = when something goes from one place to another

strict = when something must be followed or done a certain way

substantially = (here) a large amount

suffered = when someone has had bad things happen to them

supervising = looking after, when someone watches you to check you are doing the right thing

surrounding = around something else

tragic = when something is really bad, usually involving injuries and death

transferred = to go from one place to another

travel = go from one place to another

vaccine = a medicine which will stop you from getting a disease

vast bulk = a very, very large amount or large part of something

view = (here) opinion

vulnerable = people who cannot protect themselves

workforce = all the workers