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LOCKDOWN FATIGUE

Qld border closure compounds problems for Northern Rivers

by Bob Dooley

OK it was fun for a while, but now the novelty has worn off.

Though the garden has never looked better and the cutlery drawer is finally organised, there are no visitors, no restaurant meals, no live entertainment, no mingling, no browsing... it's getting harder.

The stay at home order for regional NSW began at 5pm on 14th August, initially for seven days, then extended to 10th September.

With the State now recording over 1000 new Covid cases per day, it is likely that the "snap lockdown" will be extended again, though with greater freedom to gather outdoors for fully vaccinated adults.

Border closures have had an additional impact, with Northern Rivers border zone residents only able to cross the Queensland border for an essential purpose, and the permitted reasons are very limited.

The Queensland government says the hard border could be in place until at least late October, despite on-going discussions between cross-border bureaucrats.

It is galling that the "border bubble" LGAs, including

the whole of the Northern Rivers, are considered Covid hotspots by Queensland, despite recording no instances of community transmission.

The impact on small businesses, particularly retail and hospitality in this region geared to tourism is enormous, as detailed daily in the news media. (See *Chamber of Commerce report*, p.9.)

Federal and state relief payments are available for businesses, though with problems accessing them in our region. (See *our politicians' reports*, pp.10-11.)

Financial support for employees is minimal, with no Jobkeeper payments, contributing to negative psychological, physical and emotional effects.

Lockdown fatigue has been described worldwide as a state of exhaustion caused by the long-term effects of Covid-19 and the changes it has caused to every aspect of life, including personal freedoms, which have continued for months, sometimes with no end in sight.

While in part it can be attributed to our addiction to certainty (see *Aidan Rickett's article*, p.12), people's deteriorating physical and mental health are tangible, though there is considerable health advice about ways to



minimise these effects (see *Sonia Barton's column*, p.20).

At present, lockdowns are acknowledged to be our only hope to reduce the spread of the virus, at least until we reach the magic number of 80% fully vaccinated.

However, the cumulative toll of financial stress, disconnection from friends and family, working from home, home-schooling, no travel outside the LGA, no holidays and living in a ghost town have produced levels of frustration that have resulted

in widespread protests in contravention of health orders, with a police response which has not helped to dissipate these reactions.

Laurie Axtens' comments on crisis management (p.20) are pertinent, as is S Sorrensen's sonnet (p.16).

With a bit of effort, we can build our resilience to get through these lockdowns and prepare for a new normal.

As one correspondent said, "Send out the good stuff, prayers, chants, and loads of love."

Ways to beat lockdown fatigue

by Rhalou Allerhand and Annie Hayes, netdoctor.co.uk

1. Exercise exercise exercise
2. Create a strict routine
3. Top up your Vitamin D stores
4. Go easy on the refined carbs
5. Watch your caffeine intake
6. Check your stress levels
7. Eat plenty of healthy food
8. Don't forget to drink water
9. Get busy
10. Perfect your sleep routine



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