Coronavirus: Remote and Indigenous Australians

SPEECH

Wednesday, 4 March 2020

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Mr JOYCE (New England) (13:45): I put a Facebook post out the other day stating how important it is that we look after people in remote and Indigenous communities, because the coronavirus's effect on them will be exacerbated by their remoteness and their lack of contact with even basic facilities such as a doctor's surgery. One of the responses I got on Facebook was someone saying: 'Wrong. Their isolation is their greatest protection. Outback and rural communities have very low likelihood of transmission.' This is absolute rubbish. They are, and we see in reports now, the most vulnerable in our community and we should be doing everything within our endeavours to help them.

It's also important to note that 23 members of the parliament of Iran have contracted coronavirus, and we should be very mindful of that. We should have a protection mechanism in this parliament to deal with it so we don't have the spread of the virus. We also note that in South Korea, at a certain church, it was exacerbated by the close connection of people, and, by reason of them yelling, they said there was wide spread of the disease. That is, for me, question time. We've had Boris Johnson saying that we should be concentrating more on our capacity to work at home so as to create a greater capacity of social distancing to reduce the affect. These should be taken into account here. Might I say that, if you have a fatality rate of around one per cent, out of the 151 people in this room, that means we're going to lose two of them.