

QR scanning is important

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The Virus struck close to home today: It was in Coles at Southland, 10 minutes walk from home, last Monday. And I know my wife was in that very shop earlier this week. Fortunately she conscientiously scans in with her smart phone wherever she goes, so I know she'd get contacted if there was any overlap between her visit and the "case's". It turns out she was there on a different day. Phew!

I see a lot of people who have a cavalier approach to QR scanning when entering shops and cafes. Last week a group of about 8 people came into a Vietnamese restaurant where I was having lunch, walked straight past the QR code at the entrance and sat down. So I went to the front, took the framed QR and plonked it on their table saying "Here, let me help you".

So do I have a bit of a thing about this? Yes I do! I understand how important it is to you, me, our loved ones and the whole community. It appears from the few numbers I have seen that every person with the delta strain infects around 3 other people. It takes less of a chain reaction to make a nuclear bomb! Chain reactions in power reactors are controlled by inserting neutron absorbing control rods. Absent lockdowns and vaccinations, Covid chain reactions are controlled by quickly tracing through chains of infected people and isolating them. The faster and easier the contact tracing, the more likely it is to work. The more difficult the contact tracing the greater the chance of the contact tracers being overwhelmed, the infection going nuclear, and people dying.

It is a social duty of every individual to do their bit to assist the contact tracers.

If you have a smart phone and use "the app"

Case A: If you have scanned on entering a venue, and Covid is subsequently detected in that venue, the contact tracers will be able to contact you very quickly and get you to take a test. Early detection of Covid could save your life. It could also save your friends and family, because you have a greater chance of being in isolation while, and if, you are infectious.

Case B: You become a mystery case and are found to have Covid with no known source. If you have scanned in to all the places you visited in the last week, the contact tracers will be able to back track your movements and contact everyone who was in those places at the same time as you. That could save many lives.

By the way, do use the official app, not a general purpose QR scanner. It's made for the job, and much easier to use. It can also save the scanned code until you get home to your WiFi.

What if you don't have a suitable phone?

Some people don't have smartphones, or their phones are too old to run the Service Victoria scanner app (or any QR reader app). In that case there should be a paper log-in form provided by every venue, and you should use it.

Case C: You have filled in the paper form on entering a shop, and Covid is subsequently detected in that shop. That will allow you can be contacted and told to get tested and isolate. But it will take significantly longer, because every such contact has to be made manually.

Case D: If you become a mystery case and are found to have Covid with no known source, the only record

of your movements is in your head. How successful will contact tracers be in establishing all the public places you have been to in the last two weeks? With my memory these days I'd say Buckley's chance!

There is also provision for a venue to have a terminal with which a staff member can log you in. I have not actually seen that myself, but if it is done it would be as good as scanning with your own phone. Except, that is, for some idiots who give an incorrect phone number, thus sabotaging the entire process.

What if you have a suitable smart phone but don't use it for scanning?

In that case I would politely, but with an edge in my voice, urge you to take the effort to install the Services Victoria app and learn how to use it. If you look at Case C above, not using it increases your personal risk if you visit a hot spot. And Case D shows that you could be placing your whole community at risk if you get sick, source unknown.

The Services Victoria app works quite well. It was a bit rough at first, and I would suggest a couple of improvement in usability if they would listen to me, but it doesn't trip my very low tolerance threshold for ill-conceived software (the Fed's Covid Safe app certainly did, before I even tried it out - its basic premise is fatally flawed).

You can get the app here: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checking-in-qr-codes>

You can also keep an eye on hotspots here: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/exposure-sites-map> Scroll down the page for a map. Make sure to hit refresh if you leave it open in a browser tab

And if you won't QR scan because it violates your privacy? I won't say what I think of that.

