

## HOT TOPIC TASMANIAN BORDERS

# Spell out reasons for closures

THE statement by the Premier that he would consider opening Tasmania's borders by the end of July needs further clarification. The medical opinions from the chief and deputy chief Commonwealth medical officers clearly state there is no medical reason to close state borders.

It is incumbent on the Premier to release what medical advice he is acting on and who gave it to him. If on the other hand he is relying on the quaint view that he is protecting fortress Tasmania, surrounded as we are by a moat, it needs to be pointed out that eventually the virus will return and we have to learn to live with it and cope with infections if and when they arise with public health measures such as testing and contact tracing.

The only alternative to learning to live with the virus is to permanently isolate Tasmania from the rest of the world which is a ludicrous suggestion. If he has other reasons for keeping the borders closed, he should make these public.

**John Freeman**  
**Sandy Bay**

### Decide our own distance

NOW is the time to remove the legal restrictions in Tasmania that were brought in to stop the spread of COVID-19. These restrictions have been of great benefit in stopping the spread. But they no longer provide significant ongoing benefit, because we now have zero active known cases of COVID-19. While there may be undetected cases, we have widespread testing and sophisticated contact tracing, so there is little risk that removing restric-

tions would see COVID-19 regain a foothold. The restrictions in Tasmania involve significant cost. Many sports, arts and leisure activities that underpin our living standards continue to be banned or restricted. This is also damaging business and employment. Unemployment is particularly damaging for thousands of temporary visa holders in Tasmania who are ineligible for JobSeeker and JobKeeper.

The tensions of high unemployment in the general community can also feed into heightened racism and discrimination. It makes sense to continue with border restrictions and governments need to consider active steps for long-term prosperity. But first do no harm. Let's remove the restrictions within Tasmania and let Tasmanians decide their social distance.

**Waqas Durrani, chair**  
**Multicultural Council of Tasmania**

### Jeff, play at home

WHAT our Premier has done for our state during these most difficult three months places Peter Gutwein in the highest regard. Play and stay in your own backyard Jeff Kennett. When Victoria is virus-free and our Premier opens our border, jump on a plane and visit paradise.

**Stewart Edwards**  
**Mount Stuart**

### Reuniting families

I AM disappointed with state leaders as they debate who should and shouldn't enter their states. While they have done a sterling job, as with our national leaders, in

averting a disaster of catastrophic proportions, we are now subject daily to sniping about which state can or can't be visited. There is one really good reason for opening borders — reuniting families. I wait with bated breath for the Queensland border to open, hopefully on July 10, so I can visit grandchildren on the Gold Coast and in NSW. I recognise I will have to self-isolate for two weeks upon return. Once a year we pack up our motorhome, spend a large amount to sail across the ditch and spend a month with family in their backyards in holidays so we can spend quality time with grandchildren. I am over the holiday-at-home message. I am more than happy to spend every cent in Tasmania. But I want to spend my hard-earned family dollar with my growing family.

**Stephen McGrath**  
**East Devonport**

### Don't put it all to waste

WHY would anyone in their right mind want to open our state borders at this time and the likes of Jeff Kennett and Martyn Goddard need to have a good look at themselves. Victoria is experiencing a major increase in virus cases and China is heading for disaster again. Keep our borders closed until we can be sure the virus is contained. Don't be pushed into opening up our borders Mr Premier, because if you do we could well return to much more severe lockdowns for months and put all the good work so far to waste as well as put the health of our state in jeopardy.

**Scott White**  
**Sorell**