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KEEPING COVID-SAFE AT TAMWORTH COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL

After a two-year absence, Australia's largest music event *Tamworth Country Music Festival* returns, and festival-goers are urged to stay COVID-safe while enjoying the event.

Public Health Physician, Dr David Durrheim, said community safety is a priority with COVID-19 case numbers still high in the community.

"With people out in crowds and moving between venues, there's greater risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus," Dr Durrheim said.

"If you're attending the festival and cannot safely socially distance, I encourage you to wear a mask indoors, practice good hand hygiene, participate in outdoor activities where possible and if your vaccinations are not up to date, please get vaccinated – it offers important protection for you, your friends and the community.

"In the event that you have symptoms of COVID-19, don't attend the festival. Instead, get tested and isolate while awaiting results."

While the Tamworth Country Music Festival is typically held in the heat of January, this year's event will take place from 18 to 24 April, during the cooler season – however it's not time to become complacent with sun safety or mosquito protection.

"Ensure sunscreen, light long sleeved clothing, hats and water bottles are all included in your festival checklist." Dr Durrheim said.

All festival attendees are encouraged to actively protect themselves against mosquito bites to reduce the risk of Japanese encephalitis virus.

"Reduce your chances of getting bitten by wearing mosquito repellent – especially formulas that contain DEET, picaridin or oil of eucalyptus" Dr Durrheim said.

With the expected increase in visitors to the region, Tamworth Hospital is ready to provide high quality care, with surge plans in place to manage any increase in presentations. All patients who require care, for any condition, will be triaged and prioritised according to their clinical need.

Those in need of urgent medical attention should present to the emergency department or call Triple Zero (000).

For interview requests contact HNELHD-Media@health.nsw.gov.au or 0418 463 031.