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# NSW Minister Don Harwin apologises for relocating to Central Coast house during pandemic

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By [Lisa Visentin](#)

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NSW Minister Don Harwin has apologised for relocating to his holiday home during the coronavirus crisis, as the state's top cop warned he would be fined \$1000 if his excuse didn't "cut the mustard".

Mr Harwin rushed back to Sydney after he was photographed at his second home at Pearl Beach on the Central Coast, undermining Premier Gladys Berejiklian's message that people must not travel over the Easter long weekend.

Minister Don Harwin. *CREDIT: ALEX ELLINGHAUSEN*

In a statement on Thursday morning, Mr Harwin said he had relocated to the property "a number of weeks prior" to the public health orders coming into effect, which prohibits all non-essential travel without a "reasonable excuse".

"I took advice from my department officials about the Public Health Order to ensure I adhered to the guidelines during this period," said Mr Harwin, whose ministerial responsibilities include the arts, Aboriginal affairs as well as being Special Minister of State.

"While I was assured I was compliant with the guidelines I apologise to the Premier and the people of NSW. "

Ms Berejiklian also apologised for Mr Harwin's actions, saying she was "deeply disappointed" but claimed he had not broken the rules.

"I regret and apologise to everybody that someone from my team undertook this activity and the perception of it is not good," Ms Berejiklian said.

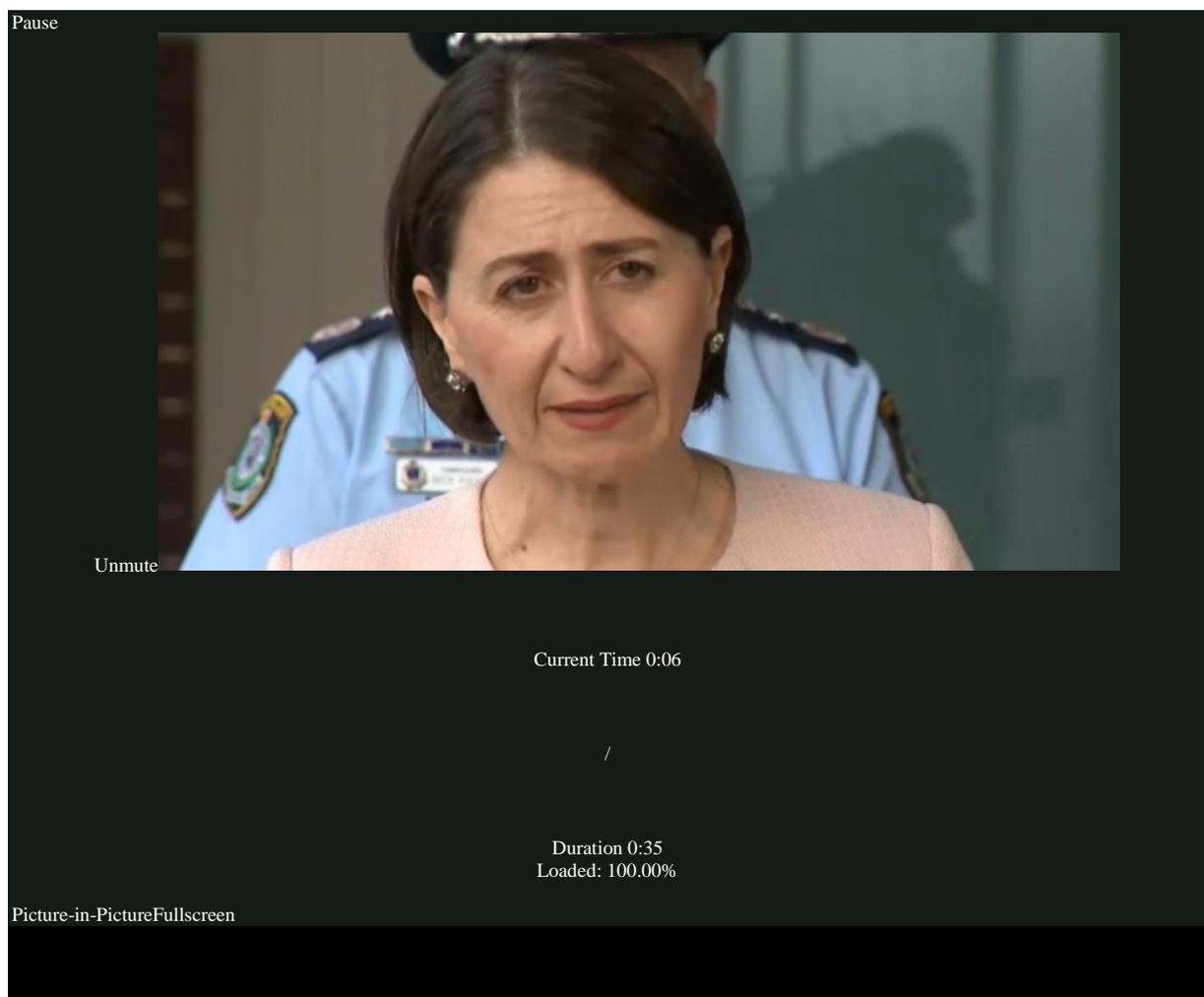
"I was advised a few days ago that he decided to make that his principal place to live some three weeks ago," Ms Berejiklian said.

"Even though the perception is horrible, he stuck to the rules in terms of where he based himself because it was prior to the restrictions."

The public health orders, which were implemented on March 30, state that moving "between different places of residence of the person" is a reasonable excuse for leaving the home, while "taking a holiday in a regional area is not".

Police Commissioner Mick Fuller said he would seek an explanation from Mr Harwin and "happily" fine him \$1000 if his excuse did not "stack up".

"If (Mr Harwin's) excuse doesn't cut the mustard he'll get the fine," Commissioner Fuller said.





The NSW Arts Minister Don Harwin has been asked to return to Sydney after being found to be staying at his holiday home on the Central Coast despite authorities' pleas to stay out of regional towns.