

NEWS

Vaccination targets set: National Cabinet agrees to pathway to new COVID normal

[Matt Woodley](#)

30/07/2021 7:38:46 PM

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has revealed the targets Australia needs to hit to ease restrictions and start down the road back to normal.



Prime Minister Scott Morrison revealing the four-phase plan to reporters following National Cabinet. (Image: AAP)

More than 70% of eligible Australians will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before Australia can progress to the next stage of a new four-phase plan agreed to by National Cabinet on Friday afternoon.

The phases are suppression (which is where the country currently sits), transition, consolidation and the final phase.

While lockdowns will by still be possible once Australia reaches the 70% vaccination target, Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters they will be 'less likely' and something people should 'not normally expect' due to the level of protection afforded by such high vaccination rates.

'In the first phase, the suppression phase, it is important to note that early and stringent and short lockdowns will be necessary to deal with outbreaks [of] this Delta strain,' Prime Minister Morrison said.

The 70% threshold does not solely apply to a national average: each state and territory will also need to hit that mark before they can move into 'Phase B'.

'Phase B ... [will] seek to minimise serious illness, hospitalisation, and fatality as a result of COVID-19 with low-level restrictions,' the Prime Minister said.

'International border caps will remain, and low-level international arrivals will be able to be undertaken under controlled settings with safe and proportionate quarantine to minimise the risk of COVID entering.'

Under the plan, vaccinated Australians will be subject to fewer restrictions than the rest of the population, but the details of this aspect of the transition phase are 'still to be worked through'.

Once the country reaches an 80% average vaccination rate, the Federal Government will abolish caps on returning vaccinated Australians, increase capped entry of student, economic and humanitarian visa holders, and lift all restrictions on out-bound travel for vaccinated Australians.

'In this phase, the measures may include maximising the vaccination coverage ... [and] minimum ongoing baseline restrictions, adjusted to minimise cases without lockdowns,' Prime Minister Morrison said.

'There will be a gradual reopening of inward and out-bound international travel with safe countries – those that are have the same sort of vaccination levels that Australia has – and proportionate quarantine and reduced requirements for fully vaccinated in-bound travellers.

The final phase of the plan will have minimal restrictions and involve living with COVID like other infectious diseases, but the Doherty Institute reportedly did not recommend a vaccination target for this stage.

Prime Minister Morrison also revealed that states and territories will maintain autonomy to determine their own restrictions, but he did not put a timeline on when the differing phases of the plan will be triggered, other than to say that he believes Australia will reach at least Phase B 'by the end of the year'.

'We haven't put timelines on this because the timelines are now in the hands of all Australians together with state and territory governments and the Federal Government,' he said. 'Whether that is achieved is up to all of us.

'If you want to get vaccinated, the AstraZeneca vaccine is there for you. It is a highly effective vaccine ... it is the most recognised COVID-19 vaccine in the world, and it is there and available to boost the vaccination efforts right across the country.

'Every single vaccine will take us closer to achieving each of these steps and Australians, we have to take each step together and that starts with walking in the door of that vaccine clinic and seeing that GP, that pharmacist, the state hub, and getting that vaccine.'

Prime Minister Morrison also confirmed there is no mechanism to prevent states or territories enforcing their own, stricter version of the plan, but said he believes 'residents of those states would be very disappointed if they were held back'.

'This is a plan that we have agreed to in principle,' he said. 'Once we've finalised the plan and the other elements to it that I've noted this evening, we will be releasing further information at that time.

'There was certainly a good consensus today that this has to be a national plan and that we had to move together, hence why we took the decision that the whole country has to get there on average first before any individual state can move into that next phase.

'But I can tell you there is no state or jurisdiction in the country that wants to apply a lockdown or hold Australians back should it not be necessary.

'What the modelling and the work done by Doherty and Treasury showed us today was that when you get to that 70% level, you have achieved a level of coverage which enables you to then ease into that process.

‘We don’t go from shut one day, open the next. That is a very, in our view, dangerous path. What we need to do is take steps towards that – sensible, cautious steps.’

Aside from the plan outlined following National Cabinet, it was also revealed that all non-urgent elective surgery in Sydney has been suspended, while Tasmanians over 30 will be able to book COVID vaccinations from Saturday 31 July.

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Dr Adam Louws 31/07/2021 7:15:03 AM

This is ridiculous. What if people decide not to get vaccinated? Do we just stay locked down forever? No thanks!

Dr Christopher John Hazzard 31/07/2021 9:02:00 AM

Now the focus can change.
It becomes our fault that the country does not open up rather than the fault of the Federal Government.

Dr Peter Russell Allamby 31/07/2021 1:58:04 PM

In reply to Adam Louws above:

Would you rather see Covid-19 spreading through our unvaccinated communities with hospitals full of dying people, not enough ventilators to go around, the scenes from Europe and the US of early 2020 being broadcast on Australian TV?

That is the likely eventuality without strict lockdown, letting Covid-19 rip isn't a good option.

There are some good videos from learned Professors in Europe saying whether you have Covid-19 immunisation or not is ultimately an individual choice; however, as an unvaccinated person in a community where Covid-19 is circulating you are a potential source of an infection which kills 1:50 unvaccinated individuals; you don't have the right to behave in a way that is a danger to others, you may not be able to do what you did in pre Covid days. Exactly what that means would have to be defined.

Similar to smoking being a banned behaviour from enclosed public places, a behaviour with capacity to harm, no sleep lost over that now

Dr Wendelin Ikarus Dietrich Fischer 1/08/2021 1:01:17 AM



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Have they ever considered recent data from Iceland, Malta or Israel - almost 80% double vaccinated (Iceland) and still a shocking high number of COVID cases - herd immunity is an illusion

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