

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 2 July 2021

KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE AND AVOIDING LOCKDOWNS

The Victorian Government has put forward a plan designed to keep Australia safe while we wait for the vaccine rollout – and do everything we can to avoid lockdowns.

Building on comments made by Premier Daniel Andrews earlier this week, Victoria's plan urges National Cabinet to chart a course out of the pandemic for Australians by focusing on four key areas:

- A nationally consistent approach to reducing numbers of international arrivals in hotel quarantine, until greater vaccine coverage has been reached
- Refining the eligibility criteria for Australians to travel abroad and to return home
- A nationally agreed vaccination target which would allow for the application of different quarantine arrangements based on stratified risk assessments of incoming travellers
- Options for safer, Commonwealth-led alternatives to hotel quarantine that can be used both in the short-term and as part of an ongoing reset once a vaccination target has been reached

Australia continues to face newer, more contagious COVID-19 strains which leave the nation with little choice but to apply restrictions to limit movement and stop the spread of the virus.

More than half of Australia's population is currently living under a lockdown order – in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

In the past two months alone, hotel quarantine leaks across the country have seen more than 17 million Australians forced to endure hard lockdowns and tough restrictions.

Nationally, there were 4.9 failures per 1,000 positive cases in quarantine – meaning one outbreak from quarantine is expected for every 204 infected travellers. Since April 2020, on average 308 infected travellers arrived in Australia each month, amounting to 1.5 outbreaks expected per month.

Victoria's plan aims to reduce the risk of new, highly infectious COVID-19 variants entering the country through international arrivals in quarantine – no matter which state they're arriving in – until we have a critical mass of Australians vaccinated.

This gives us the best chance to bolster new approaches to fighting COVID-19, including greater vaccination coverage, the completion of alternative quarantine accommodation as proposed in Victoria, diverse quarantine arrangements, as well as the ability to safely open the country – reducing the number of lockdowns and restrictions.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Australians want to know that there's a plan to get us through this pandemic. This is the work that needs to happen to get us there and people are entitled to expect their governments to work together to get it done."

"We have a critical window to get our population vaccinated, defeat this pandemic and return to a sense of free and normal life."

"Locking some people out is much better than locking everybody down. That's the government's position, that's my position and that's what I'll argue at National Cabinet today."

Media contact: Jamila Fontana 0409 741 279 | Jamila.fontana@minstaff.vic.gov.au