National Plan to transition Australia’s National COVID-19 Response

National Cabinet agreed to a plan to transition Australia’s National COVID-19 Response from its current pre-vaccination settings, focussing on continued suppression of community transmission, to post-vaccination settings focussed on prevention of serious illness, hospitalisation and fatality, and the public health management of other infectious diseases.

Phases triggered in a jurisdiction when the average vaccination rates across the nation have reached the threshold and that rate is achieved in a jurisdiction expressed as a percentage of the eligible population (16+), based on the scientific modelling conducted for the COVID-19 Risk Analysis and Response Task Force.

A. Current Phase: Vaccinate, Prepare and Pilot*
- 70% vaccination (2 doses)

- Continue to strongly suppress the virus for the purpose of minimising community transmission
- Measures may include:
  - Accelerate vaccination rates;
  - Close international borders to keep COVID-19 out;
  - Early, stringent and short lockdowns if outbreaks occur;
  - Minimise cases in the community through effective test, trace and isolate capabilities;
  - Implement the national vaccination plan to offer every Australian an opportunity to be vaccinated with the necessary doses of the relevant vaccine as soon as possible;
  - Inbound passenger caps temporarily reduced
  - Domestic travel restrictions directly proportionate to lockdown requirements;
  - Commonwealth to facilitate increased commercial flights to increase international repatriations to Darwin for quarantine at the Centre for National Resilience in Howard Springs;
  - International Freight Assistance Mechanism extended;
  - Trial and pilot the introduction of alternative quarantine options, including home quarantine for returning vaccinated travellers;
  - Expand commercial trials for limited entry of student and economic visa holders;
  - Recognise and adopt the existing digital Medicare Vaccination Certificate (automatically generated for every vaccination registered on AIR);
  - Establish digital vaccination authentication at international borders;
  - Prepare vaccine booster programme; and
  - Undertake a further review of the national hotel quarantine network.

B. Vaccination Transition Phase
- ≥80% vaccination (2 doses)

- Seek to minimise serious illness, hospitalisation and fatality as a result of COVID-19 with low level restrictions
- Measures may include:
  - Maintain high vaccination rates, encouraging uptake through incentives and other measures;
  - Minimise cases in the community through ongoing low-level restrictions and effective track and trace;
  - Lockdowns less likely but possible;
  - International border caps and low-level international arrivals, with safe and proportionate quarantine to minimise the risk of COVID entering;
  - Ease restrictions on vaccinated residents (TBD);
  - Restore inbound passenger caps at previous levels for unvaccinated returning travellers and larger caps for vaccinated returning travellers;
  - Allow capped entry of student and economic visa holders subject to quarantine arrangements and availability;
  - Introduce new reduced quarantine arrangements for vaccinated residents; and
  - Prepare/Implement vaccine booster programme (depending on timing).

C. Vaccination Consolidation Phase
- ≥80% vaccination (2 doses)

- Seek to minimise serious illness, hospitalisations and fatalities as a result of COVID-19 with baseline restrictions
- Measures may include:
  - Maximise vaccination coverage;
  - Minimum ongoing baseline restrictions, adjusted to minimise cases without lockdowns;
  - Highly targeted lockdowns only;
  - Continue vaccine booster programme;
  - Exempt vaccinated residents from all domestic restrictions;
  - Allow increased capped entry of student, economic, and humanitarian visa holders;
  - Lift all restrictions on outbound travel for vaccinated Australians; and
  - Continue testing.

D. Final Post-Vaccination Phase

- Manage COVID-19 consistent with public health management of other infectious diseases
- Measures may include:
  - Open international borders;
  - Quarantine for high-risk inbound travel;
  - Minimise cases in the community without ongoing restrictions or lockdowns;
  - Live with COVID-19: management consistent with influenza or other infectious diseases;
  - Boosters as necessary;
  - Allow uncapped inbound arrivals for all vaccinated persons, without quarantine; and
  - Allow uncapped arrivals of non-vaccinated travellers subject to pre-flight and on arrival testing.

*No jurisdiction required to increase restrictions beyond current settings

The Plan is based on the current situation and is subject to change if required.