



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 29 May 2020

UPDATE FOLLOWING NATIONAL CABINET MEETING

The National Cabinet met today to further discuss Australia's current COVID-19 response, easing restrictions in the coming months, helping Australians prepare to go back to work in a COVID-Safe environment and getting the economy moving again.

The Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy, provided an update on the measures underway, the latest data and medical advice in relation to COVID-19.

There have been over 7,100 confirmed cases in Australia and sadly 103 people have died. There are now less than 500 active cases in Australia, and over the past week, daily infection rates have remained low. Testing remains high, with more than 1.37 million tests undertaken in Australia.

We need to continue to have the right controls in place to test more people, trace those who test positive and respond to local outbreaks when they occur. These are precedent conditions to enable Australia to relax baseline restrictions and enable Australians to live and work in a COVID-19 safe economy.

National Cabinet again encouraged Australians to download the COVIDSafe app to ensure that we can protect Australians and continue to ease baseline restrictions.

More than 6.1 million Australians have already downloaded the COVIDSafe app. This is an enormous achievement but more is needed.

National Cabinet will meet again on Friday 12 June 2020.

Review of Restrictions

On 8 May 2020, National Cabinet approved the 3-Step Framework for a COVIDSafe Australia and agreed to a minimum of three weeks between implementation of each step of the framework. Movement into subsequent steps will be informed by monitoring for any evidence of increases in transmission or outbreaks, increased pressure on the health system, testing or personal protective equipment demand,

demands on the public health response to cases and community adherence and acceptance of these measures.

The number of new cases has remained low, and we have responded effectively to localised outbreaks. We've made economic and social gains – with businesses starting to open back up, people getting back to work, and friends and families getting back together.

The AHPPC has advised that there has been continued progress on meeting the majority of precedent conditions under the Pandemic Health Intelligence Plan to enable restrictions to be removed under the 3 Step COVID-Safe Australia. The precedent conditions include access to PPE, testing rates, use of the COVIDSafe App.

While it is still too early to determine the success of our measures - but the initial signs are very positive.

All states and territories have reduced transmission, enabling Step 1 conditions to be established. Some jurisdictions have been able to move further than Step 1 due to their local conditions. Successfully removing restrictions under Step 1 is estimated to return 250,000 jobs and increase economic activity by \$3.1 billion.

Given the success of the health system in reducing transmission, states and territories now have plans in place to move to Step 2 conditions under a COVIDSafe Australia 3 Step Framework in June 2020. This will allow most businesses to reopen with physical distancing, hygiene and COVID Safe work plans. It is estimated that Step 2 will return an additional \$3 billion in economic activity and 275,000 jobs to the workforce.

National Cabinet noted further updated AHPPC advice - including updated modelling, the Australian National Disease Surveillance Plan for COVID-19 and advice on use of masks.

National Health Reform Agreement

National Cabinet has finalised the 2020-2025 National Health Reform Agreement.

Under the Agreement the Commonwealth will invest an estimated \$131.4 billion in demand driven public hospital funding to improve health outcomes for all Australians and ensure the sustainability of our health system now and into the future.

The new Agreement also includes a commitment by all Australian governments to a shared long-term vision for health reform, at a time when shared investment and coordination in health has never been more important.

Principles for Public Transport operations

National Cabinet agreed that public transport services are the responsibility of the states and territories, and that it was important to continue to work together to ensure services can continue to run as safely as possible for both the workforce and passengers.

To support this effort, National Cabinet endorsed principles approved by the AHPPC which will help manage the health and safety of workers and passengers on public transport networks.

The principles outline the responsibility passengers must take when traveling on public transport including not travelling when feeling unwell, maintaining physical distance from drivers and other passengers, and avoiding handling cash.

Under the principles, public transport users are not required to wear masks but may do so on a voluntary basis.

The principles should be considered alongside Work Health and Safety requirements, public health advice and other advice jurisdictions provide in relation to mass gatherings, including on public transport.

National Cabinet agreed that the principles will be reviewed as governments progress through the three-step plan to take into account any emerging challenges or innovative solutions, or as interactions with international travel start to be considered.

The principles can be found at: <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>

National Cabinet

National Cabinet has agreed to the formation of the National Federation Reform Council and the cessation of the COAG model.

National Cabinet has worked effectively to respond to COVID-19. The new National Federation Reform Council agreed to by Premiers, Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister, will change the way the Commonwealth and states and territories effectively and productively work together to address new areas of reform.

The National Cabinet will be driven by an initial single agenda - to create jobs. A job making agenda.

By any measure, National Cabinet has proven to be a much more effective body for taking decisions in the national interest than the COAG structure.

At the centre of the National Federation Reform Council will be National Cabinet.

National Cabinet will continue to meet regularly and will be briefed directly by experts such as the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee.

Initial reform areas will be agreed by National Cabinet.

During the COVID-19 period, National Cabinet will continue to meet every two weeks. In the future, these meetings will take place once a month.

The Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR), which is essentially a meeting of all Treasurers, will report to National Cabinet. CFFR will take responsibility for all funding agreements including National Partnership Agreements.

Important taskforces will continue in areas that are critical to our National Agenda. The taskforce on women's safety and domestic violence will continue their critical work, as will the Indigenous affairs taskforce with a particular focus on Closing the Gap.

Once a year, National Cabinet, CFFR and the Australian Local Government Association will meet in person as the National Federation Reform Council with a focus on priority national federation issues such as Closing the Gap and Women's Safety.

This new model will streamline processes and avoid endless meetings that do not result in action. This is a congestion busting process that will get things done with a single focus on creating jobs.

This is an exciting new agenda for our federation and is about rebuilding confidence to get Australians back into work.

Further details of the National Federation Reform Council and consolidation and reset of the Ministerial Forums and Ministerial Regulatory Councils will be reviewed by National Cabinet.

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