



# Progress Report: Covid-19 Reopening & Recovery

September 2021



Committee  
for  
Sydney



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# Introduction

Just over a month ago, the Committee released its Covid-19 Recovery and Reopening Plan. Since then, we've seen an incredible turnaround.

NSW is leading the country with high vaccination rates and an acceptance that Covid-zero is no longer a viable strategy.

Despite a shortage of available vaccines, the pace of vaccinations is ramping up.

We're also heading in the right direction with regard to moving life outdoors, with more permission to gather and spend time outside.

We are starting to see the outlines of what it will mean to 'live with Covid,' finally accepting the unfortunate reality that it will be an endemic disease in the human population.

NSW appears on track to fully vaccinate 70% of the population by mid-October – and we hope it will get to 80% and even higher shortly thereafter.

We have the chance to become a world leader once again by getting the rate up.

This progress report goes through our recommendations made one month ago — to celebrate how far we've come as a city and highlight what remains to be done.

We've been active on many fronts, and there has been incredible progress in the last month. We've done our best to capture the key changes, but if you see something we missed, please let us know.



# > Surviving lockdown

## Surviving lockdown

# Give people a roadmap

Since our plan was released, National Cabinet has published details around its four-stage roadmap, outlining easing of restrictions at 70 to 80% full vaccination. The NSW Government has indicated these targets and milestones will be followed.

What we need now is a clear commitment to easing restrictions once targets are met, and a detailed plan of what restrictions will be eased, how, and when. We need confidence lockdowns will not continue once we've reached 80% vaccination.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Federal government to provide detail on its four-stage reopening strategy, including dates and vaccine coverage timelines.	<b>Done:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>National Cabinet released <u>National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response</u> on July 30.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--</li></ul>
State government to outline strategy for reopening, including timing for removal of distancing measures, vaccine passports or permits, and transitioning out of reporting daily Covid-19 daily cases.	<b>Major progress, more details required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW <u>easing outdoor gathering restrictions for vaccinated people</u> from Sept. 13. In LGAs of concern, up to 5 adults from the same household able to gather outdoors. Elsewhere, groups of 5 permitted to gather outdoors within 5km of home.</li><li>Residents in LGAs of concern <u>allowed unlimited exercise (outside curfew hours)</u> since Sept. 3.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide detail on what restrictions will be lifted once 70-80% full vaccination is reached.</li><li>Increased outdoor activities should be allowed immediately.</li></ul>
State government to set clear parameters on triggers for reintroduction of restrictions, so we understand how decisions will be made and so business can plan ahead.	<b>Major progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Federal <u>four-stage plan</u> suggests at 80% full vaccination, 'highly targeted' lockdowns may continue. NSW Premier said we will not need a "<u>state-wide lockdown ever again</u>" when it hits 80%.</li><li>Our view is above 80%, even targeted lockdowns are probably not the right tool. As a permanent endemic disease, people will get Covid-19 occasionally – we can live with that if people are fully vaccinated.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plan to move away from lockdowns after 80%.</li><li>Keep in the toolbox in case a new Covid-19 variant with resistance to the vaccines were to present itself, until effective boosters are made available.</li></ul>

## Surviving lockdown

### Expand income support programs

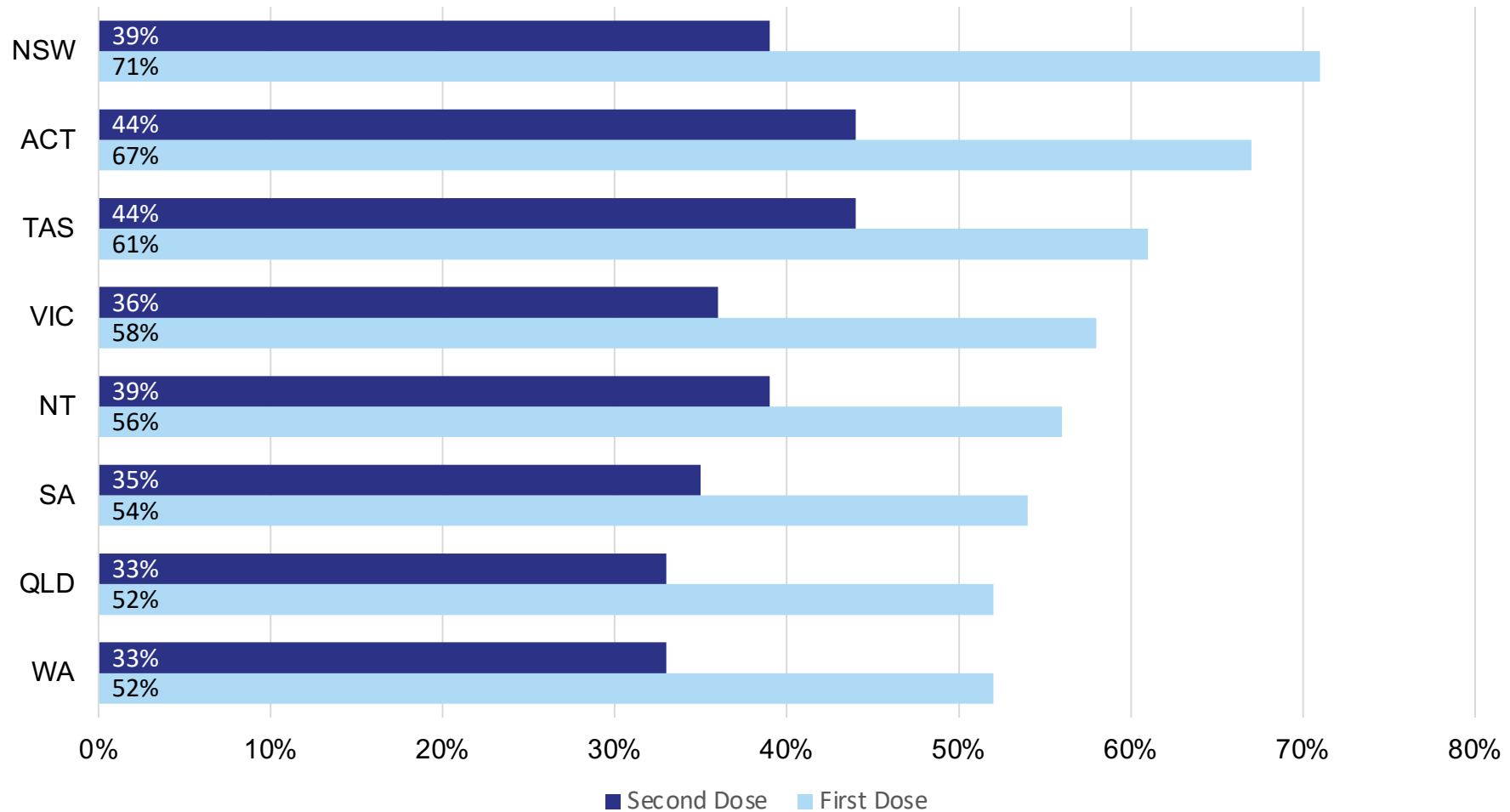
We have seen the NSW and Commonwealth Government expand income support programs over the last month. Depending how quickly we get to 70-80% full vaccination, government may need to consider expanding JobSaver again to include all industries up to \$1 billion annually.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Measures to support business with turnovers above \$250 million from highly impacted industries – by either opening JobSaver to all businesses, regardless of size, with retrospective clawback provisions, if required; or targeted support.	<b>Done, not perfect, but good enough:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Federal and NSW Governments announced <u>expansion of JobSaver program</u> on August 28. This increases annual turnover threshold from \$50 million to \$250 million and increases maximum weekly payment to eligible businesses. Tourism, hospitality and recreation businesses with an annual turnover between \$250 million and \$1 billion also eligible.</li><li>Federal and NSW Governments expanded <u>disaster relief payment</u> for individuals who have lost work due to the current lockdown.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--</li></ul>
Defer state taxes such as payroll tax for hard hit sectors.	<b>Done, not perfect, but good enough:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The NSW Treasurer announced <u>all businesses will be able to defer payroll tax until January 2022</u>.</li><li>Businesses with a payroll of \$10 million or less will see payroll tax halved, up from 25%.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--</li></ul>
Waive utility bills for people in the hardest hit LGAs.	<b>Major progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Australian Energy Regulator issued <u>Statement of Expectations for energy retailers</u> July 29 – payment plans should be offered to residents or businesses in financial distress; no disconnections or referrals to debt collection agencies should be made in this time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Governments and utility businesses should consider further financial support to households doing it tough in hardest hit LGAs.</li></ul>

## Surviving lockdown

### Vaccinations by state – at 2 September, 2021

Source: [Australian Government](#)





## Surviving lockdown

# Reopen schools

Kids are still waiting to go back to school and the HSC has been delayed.

Progress has been made, especially on getting teachers vaccinated, but the question about how to get kids back into school has not yet been resolved.

A roadmap to return to face-to-face learning has been announced, with kids set to go back to the classroom in the middle of term four. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how this will really work:

- Will children be required to take frequent antigen tests?
- Will children exposed to Covid-19 be required to self-isolate, even if they do not have symptoms – which would mean in-person schooling is not in fact being achieved for potentially very large numbers of students?

- Will there be an online schooling option for parents who are too nervous to send their kids to school?
- Should the rules for vaccinated children be different than for unvaccinated, and when will vaccines be permitted for younger groups?

The good news is the research continues to show Covid-19 is a mild illness for most kids.

We believe it is essential for their social, mental and physical wellbeing that we get them back to school once teachers are vaccinated, and that we should be prepared to tolerate some spread of Covid-19, as we do for the transmission of other viruses among school-aged populations. For the vast majority of children, it is worse to be kept home than to catch Covid-19.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Expedite vaccines for teachers and school staff as essential workers.	<b>Major progress made – hugely significant move:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSW Government announced <u>return to school plan</u> that mandates all school staff are vaccinated by November 8.</li><li>• NSW Health providing priority vaccines to school staff from September 6.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• --</li></ul>
Put in place facility management rules to minimise spread.	<b>Done:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Roadmap to return to face-to-face learning</u> outlines varying restrictions in schools at each stage of return, including mandatory face-masks for all staff / students in year 7 and above (stages 3 and 4), face masks recommended (stages 1 and 2).</li><li>• Other restrictions include travel distances allowed as per Public Health Orders.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement detailed facility management plan, including ventilation, when to send teachers / students home and when not to – Covid-19 a low risk to children, so closing schools due to infections likely not best approach.</li></ul>

## Surviving lockdown

# Reopen schools

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Then bring kids back to school.	<p><b>Major progress made:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSW Government <u>roadmap to return to face-to-face learning</u> outlines a four-stage return and full return, depending on Covid-19 restrictions.</li><li>• Kids outside LGAs of concern are set to go back to school between 25 October and 8 November, with <u>HSC delayed until 9 November</u>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Return to school should be brought forward, ideally start of term 4 – supported by growing evidence showing Covid-19 is a mild illness for children.</li><li>• Health officials need to provide comfort to parents that Covid-19 is almost always a mild disease for children.</li></ul>



## Surviving lockdown

# Keep reopening construction

The construction workforce is concentrated in the same hotspots in southwestern Sydney with large numbers of other 'essential workers.'

Getting industry back up and running relies on vaccinating the workforce, but it can progress faster because sites can be carefully managed and much of the work is done in well-ventilated environments.

Major progress has been made. But if construction cannot operate at full capacity, mega infrastructure projects will be delayed, impacting Sydney's future and economic outlook.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Work to get the construction workforce vaccinated.	<b>Well underway:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW Health ran a Vaccination Super Sunday on August 15 to prioritise vaccinating construction workers living in LGAs of concern.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--</li></ul>
Allow fully vaccinated skilled workers back onto all sites.	<b>Some progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><u>Construction reopened in Sydney</u> on July 31, but with major restrictions:</li><li>Sites only permitted to operate with the <u>lesser of 1 person per 4sqm on site or half the maximum daily workforce</u>.</li><li>Construction workers <u>only permitted on site if they have had at least one dose</u> of vaccination or can prove a recently negative Covid-19 test.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Allow construction sites to operate at full capacity if their workers have been fully vaccinated.</li></ul>
Work with the industry to better define Covid-safe workplace practices.	<b>Well underway:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The NSW Government worked closely with the construction industry to create the <u>reopening plan and the construction Covid-19 safety plan</u>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>More work needs to be done on the settings for when people are sent into home isolation, otherwise large segments of the workforce will continually be at home.</li></ul>

## Surviving lockdown

# Move social life outdoors

NSW Health has again confirmed that not a single confirmed case of Covid-19 has found to have occurred outdoors. Moving life outdoors can be the great solace that allows us to get through lockdown.

The move to allow fully vaccinated people to gather outdoors starting 13 September is hugely welcomed, as is the move to allow everyone to exercise outdoors as much as possible. It's time to stop over-policing people outdoors and instead encourage everyone outdoors.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Permit outdoor service as the first step to reopening the food and beverage sector.	<b>Progress made, more details required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Government has signalled intention to trial opening certain industries as we reach 70-80% full vaccination. So far nothing specific on outdoor dining.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW Government to expedite permitting outdoor service for fully vaccinated people.</li></ul>
Identify 25 high streets across Sydney where restaurants can take over kerb lane, and mobilise public works to allow quick temporary closures.	<b>In consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Fund restaurants with micro grants to set up outdoor dining arrangements. Create one-stop permitting shop for these streets.	<b>In consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prior to the release of the Committee's Covid-19 Reopening and Recovery plan, the <u>City of Sydney announced it would waive all outdoor dining permit fees</u> until June 2022.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>
<b>New action:</b> Stop over-policing public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW Government announced a modest easing of outdoor gathering restrictions for fully vaccinated people from September 13.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reduce police presence on the street and in outdoor locations.</li></ul>

# > Setting the stage for reopening

## Setting the stage for reopening

# Do everything possible to achieve a high level of vaccination

NSW is now leading the country and has achieved one of the fastest rates of vaccination in the world. For now, supply of vaccines continues to set the limit on rates of vaccination (noting that the shocking decisions of ATAGI have made people unwilling to accept AstraZeneca).

NSW is on target to achieve 70% double vaccinations before the end of October. At some point soon, supply will exceed demand, and our focus will shift to the harder to reach, or hesitant, demographics.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Prioritise access for those who keep the core of our society and economy functioning: supermarket workers, emergency service workers, utility workers and teachers.	<b>Done:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW Government has <u>prioritised vaccinations for authorised workers in LGAs of concern. Authorised workers include those employed in key sectors, including but not limited to construction, education, health care and social assistance, retail and transport.</u></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Need to change the settings on isolation rules, for workers who have been exposed to Covid-19, should be relaxed, initially for vaccinated workers and then everybody else, once vaccine rates reach 80%.</li></ul>
Lead the campaign with positive messages about vaccination – this is your chance to be a hero and help Sydney through this.	<b>Done:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><u>'Let's do this'</u> (NSW Government) and <u>'Arm yourself'</u> (Federal Government) vaccination campaigns launched.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mainstream in-language multicultural versions of the campaigns.</li></ul>
Use major employers, including government agencies, to deliver vaccines, repurposing flu vaccination programs and leveraging the accessibility of worksite vaccination programs.	<b>Progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Major employers including <u>Woolworths</u>, <u>NAB</u> and <u>BHP</u> have been permitted to create vaccination hubs for their employees on-site. Hopefully more will follow.</li><li>To protect business administering vaccines, the Federal Government recently finalised a <u>No Fault Covid-19 Indemnity Scheme</u>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Time for widespread rollout of this idea.</li></ul>



## Setting the stage for reopening

# Create powerful incentives for vaccination

We believe Australia should try to achieve the highest rates of vaccination in the world. But at some point, based on what we see in other countries, the pace will slow and there will be a cohort of people who are not willing to get vaccinated voluntarily. This poses ethical questions about how far the rest of us should go to accommodate those who refuse.

Vaccine passports will help, as will well-targeted culturally sensitive campaigns. Mandating vaccines for cultural and visitor sectors will be essential to economic recovery as it will allow people who are vaccinated to feel safe attending events or venues such as live performances, festivals, shops, restaurants, cafes, museums and art galleries.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Allow fully vaccinated people in and out of the country with home quarantine and testing.	<b>Progress made – more details required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The <u>National Plan to transition Australia's National Covid-19 Response</u> suggests that at 80% vaccination, outbound travel will be allowed for fully vaccinated people, and inbound travel will gradually open for fully vaccinated people. No dates have been announced and no commitments have been made yet about when this can happen.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Commonwealth to confirm commitment to this with reinstatement of pre-Covid level caps as soon as possible.</li><li>Emerging urgent priority is to establish mutual recognition systems for other countries' vaccines and agree upon which vaccines are accepted. We believe the right answer may be to rely on the list of vaccines recognised by the World Health Organisation.</li></ul>
Provide vouchers to fully vaccinated people that also stimulate the economy, e.g. dining and flights in Australia.	<b>Progress made – more details required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW Ministers and MPs have discussed a <u>Covid-19 voucher scheme</u> to boost vaccination rates.</li><li><u>Businesses are leading the way on vaccination vouchers</u>, e.g. Qantas (chance to win flight vouchers or unlimited travel for one year), HAG Imports (offering staff a \$100 Myer card), and Luxury Escapes (offering \$200 million in vouchers).</li><li>NSW government has announced Stay &amp; Rediscover vouchers will be launched for accommodation providers in postcode 2000, in the City of Sydney, when health advice changes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW government to launch new voucher scheme to provide a strong signal to people to get vaccinated.</li><li>Stay &amp; Rediscover vouchers to be made available immediately to fully vaccinated people.</li><li>If vaccination rate begins to lag behind supply, consider paying people to get vaccinated — \$100 for the first jab, and \$200 for the second jab.</li></ul>

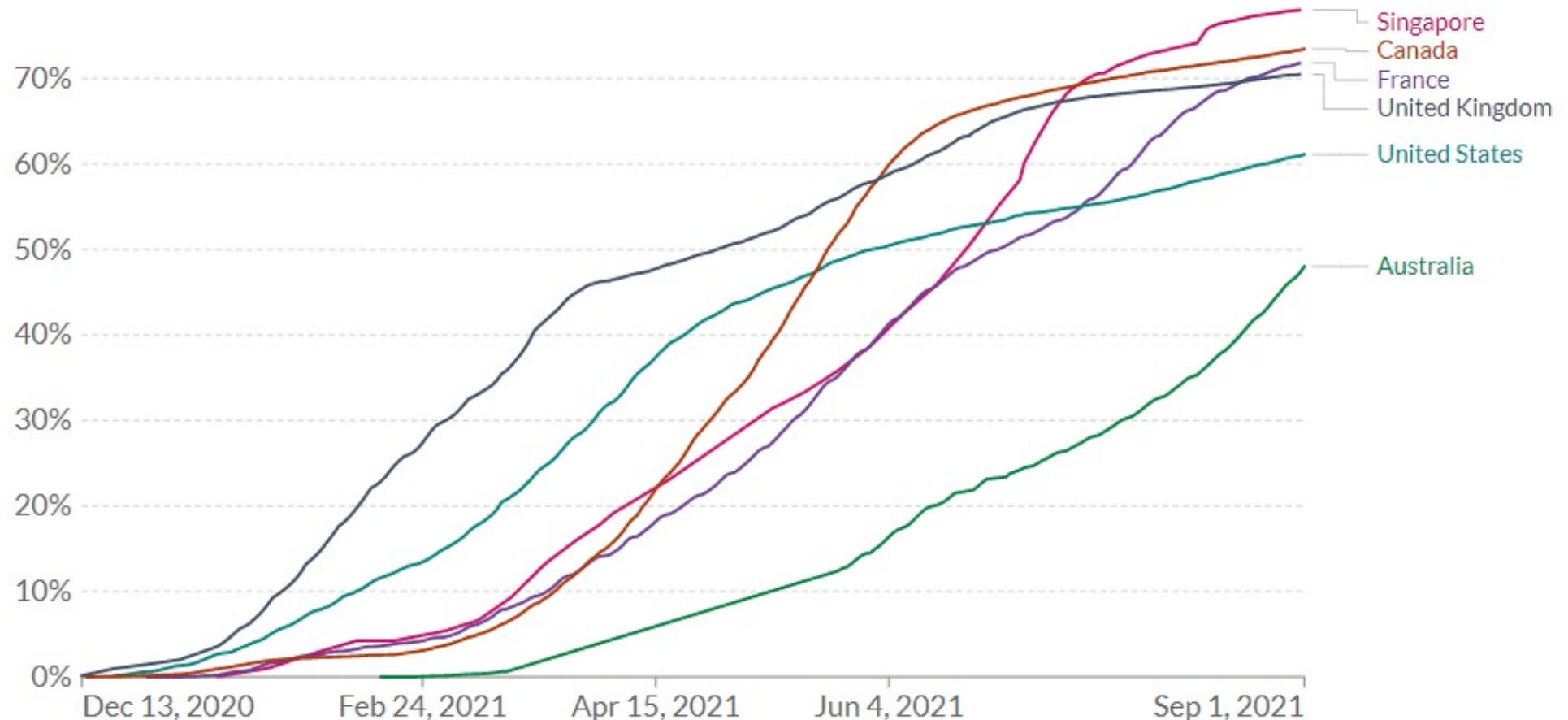
## Setting the stage for reopening

# Create powerful incentives for vaccination

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Require vaccinations to enter bars, restaurants, shops, public transport, schools and indoor workplaces.	<p><b>Progress made – more details required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <u>National Plan to transition Australia's National Covid-19 Response</u> suggests this will happen at 80% but no official announcements have been made confirming the new system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government needs to detail exactly which things will be restricted to fully vaccinated Australians – the strength of this incentive depends on what it is that vaccines enable you to do. The sooner government makes this announcement the better, once people know exactly what activities they can enjoy when fully vaccinated, job rates will likely rise.</li> </ul>
Support with an immunity passport system.	<p><b>Progress made – more actions and details required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Government is <u>developing a vaccine passport system</u> that will allow proof of check-in and proof of vaccination in one process.</li> <li>Currently, vaccination certificates can be accessed on the Medicare app, but there are questions around how these certificates will be used to gain access to venues and other activities once we emerge out of lockdown. The NSW and Federal Governments are working on integrating the vaccine certificate on the ServiceNSW app to reduce friction for customers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal Government needs to open its API to ServiceNSW so the vaccine passport can be integrated.</li> <li>NSW Government to finalise and release passport.</li> <li>NSW Government to nominate a list of activities and industries that will be accessible with an immunity passport.</li> </ul>
Require vaccination for NSW Government employees.	<p><b>Major progress made:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Government released two Public Health Orders that <u>require all government health and aged care workers to be fully vaccinated by November 30</u>.</li> <li>NSW Government <u>return to school plan</u> requires all school staff are vaccinated by November 8.</li> <li><u>NSW Police requires all employees to be fully vaccinated by November 30</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect as many people as possible, NSW Government should take an expansive view of which roles should be required to be vaccinated.</li> </ul>

## Setting the stage for reopening

# Share of people who have received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine



Australian vaccination rates are ramping up. However, while our rate of vaccination is increasing, it is still slower than countries that went before us. In particular, Canada, France, Singapore and the United States got their population vaccinated faster by offering incentives to vaccinate.

\*NOTE: This graph shows total population, not population eligible for vaccination in Australia (16+). Source: [Our World in Data](#)

## Setting the stage for reopening

# Create powerful incentives for vaccination

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Encourage other businesses to require employees to be vaccinated as a condition of employment.	<b>Major progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Australian companies including <u>SPC</u>, <u>Qantas</u> and <u>Telstra</u> have announced mandatory vaccines for all staff.</li><li>To protect business with 'no jab no job' policies, the Federal Government recently finalised a <u>No Fault Covid-19 Indemnity Scheme</u>.</li><li>The Prime Minister has said "<u>an employer may make a reasonable directive to staff</u>" to be vaccinated, but has also assured businesses who have not mandated vaccines they may receive <u>protection against lawsuits claiming they are not fulfilling their duty of care</u>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In the absence of the Commonwealth providing stronger legal protections to businesses, the NSW Government should outline in its Public Health Orders where these mandates should apply.</li></ul>
If incentives are not enough, we may need to mandate.	<b>Major progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>With current vaccination rates it doesn't look like we'll need to mandate vaccines for the population as a whole.</li><li>NSW Government has mandated health, aged care and school staff get vaccinated. Several businesses now require their staff get vaccinated, and we expect more will follow.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--</li></ul>
Launch a campaign to bring Australians home by Christmas.	<b>Progress made – more details required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The <u>National Plan to transition Australia's National Covid-19 Response</u> suggests once we reach 70% full vaccination rate, inbound passenger caps should be restored for returning travellers, with higher rates for vaccinated travellers compared to unvaccinated travellers.</li><li>The NSW Premier has suggested <u>international travel may be reopened by Christmas</u> if we reach 80% vaccination in time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Allow at-home quarantine for fully vaccinated people.</li></ul>



## Setting the stage for reopening

# Set a realistic vaccination target for reopening

We've been given clear and realistic targets for reopening once we've reached 70-80% full vaccination. We now need the Federal and State Governments to commit to and detail timings for removal of social distancing measures, as well as details on how restrictions will be eased, and at what point they'll be removed entirely.

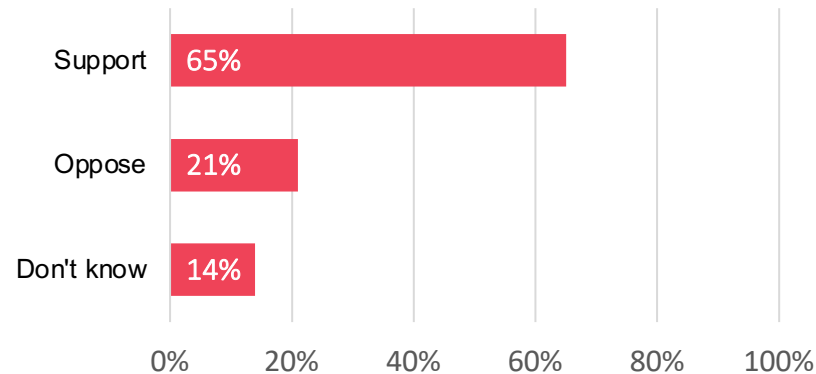
At this point, the 80% target looks realistic, but we will have to watch carefully to see when the rate of vaccination slows.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Strive to achieve a high vaccination rate. But once everyone has been offered the chance to be vaccinated, be willing to open back up.	<b>Major progress made – more details required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The NSW Premier has advised <u>once we reach 70-80% full vaccination restrictions will ease</u>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Need details on how we'll reopen if vaccination rates plateau before reaching 80%.</li></ul>
Alternately, if we are not willing to open up based on vaccine availability, we may need to turn to legal requirements to get vaccinated.	<b>Not needed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Vaccination rates have been so strong that it is unlikely this will be necessary.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--</li></ul>
NSW has the opportunity to reopen to the world based on the success of its own vaccination strategy, regardless of what other states do.	<b>Major progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><u>NSW Government has confirmed it will reopen based on vaccination rates</u>, regardless of other states, and this has been supported by the Federal Government.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>--</li></ul>

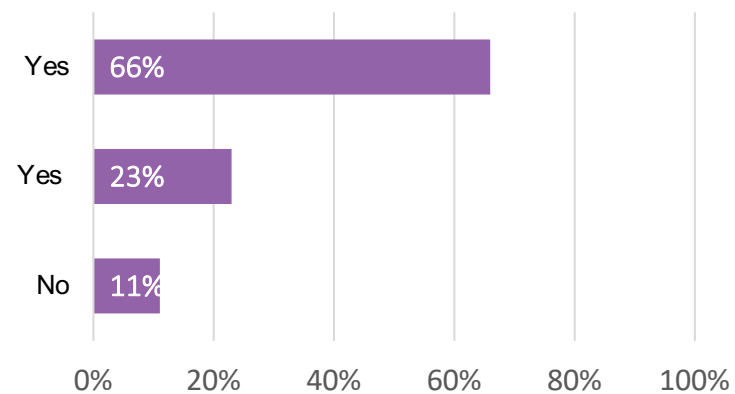
## Setting the stage for reopening

# Recent polling shows strong support

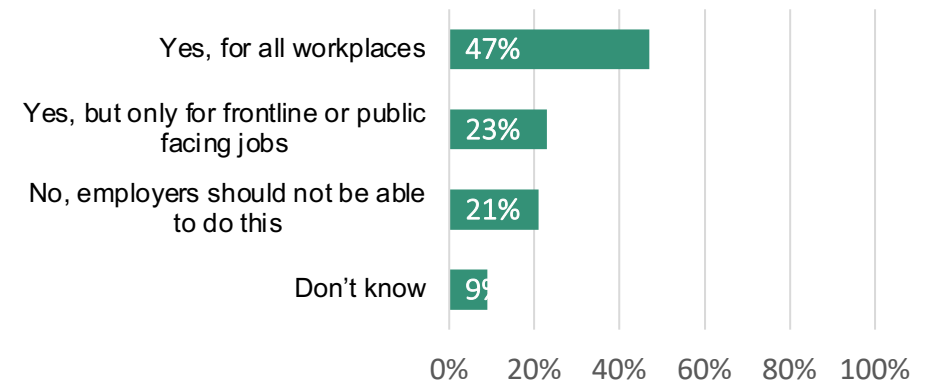
Source: [Daily Telegraph, News Corp Australia Covid-19 National Poll](#)



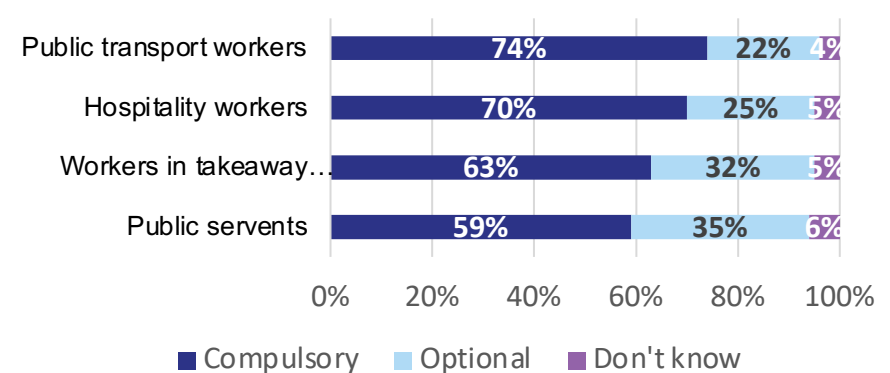
France has a vaccine passport that people must produce to access sports venues, cinemas, museums, nightclubs and festivals. When everyone has had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated, would you support or oppose introducing a similar vaccine passport in Australia?



When everyone has had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated, should Australians be allowed to travel overseas?



Do you think employers should have the right to make it compulsory for their staff to be vaccinated before being allowed to enter the workplace?



Governments could also make vaccination compulsory by law. Do you think vaccination should be compulsory or optional for people who work in the following industries?

# ➤ Rebuild the sectors crushed by Covid-19





## Rebuild the sectors crushed by Covid-19

### University and research strategy

For Australia to thrive in the future economy, a world leading university sector is essential. Returning international students is key to economic recovery from Covid-19. In 2019, international students contributed \$40 billion to the national economy (prior to the pandemic); this fell to \$31 billion in 2020.

Australia is at risk of losing international students to countries that are now allowing and seeking the return of fully vaccinated students, such as Canada and the United Kingdom. It will take a focused effort to help universities recover and rebuild. Allowing fully vaccinated international students in is low risk with high economic and social benefits.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Develop a national plan to renew Australia's higher education sector with a strong focus on funding R&D.	<b>No significant progress – major levers with Federal Government:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW Government released <u>Higher Education Strategy Action Plan</u> on August 19 – includes incentivising partnerships between universities and VET sector through 'Collaboration and Innovation Fund', supporting new education models including Aerotropolis Multiversity and Institutes of Applied Technology.</li><li>NSW Government announced \$11 million <u>Innovation Scale Up Fund</u> to support <u>commercialisation of R&amp;D that address impacts of Covid-19, and increase access to research facilities and equipment.</u></li><li>The industry eagerly awaits the <u>University Research Commercialisation Scheme</u> and <u>University-Industry Collaboration in Teaching and Learning Review.</u></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Significant federal action on this required.</li><li>NSW Government to advocate for more federal R&amp;D funding – including additional 10% collaboration premium in calculation of R&amp;D tax offsets.</li><li>Federal Government to create additional Commonwealth Supported Places for courses that blend VET and university education, and supplement existing state funding for VET-accredited diplomas that include university content.</li></ul>
Resume efforts to safely return international students once current lockdown is lifted.	<b>Progress made – more details required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><u>National Plan to transition Australia's National Covid-19 Response</u> suggests at 70% full vaccination, Australia will allow a capped number of student and economic visa holders.</li><li>Important emerging issue is which vaccines Australia will recognise as valid to get into the country, and therefore which countries will be able to send international students again.</li><li>Federal Government reviewing pilot Study NSW program to <u>support safe return of international students – was set to be approved before the current lockdown and will likely resume at 70% vaccination.</u></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Federal Government to commit to return fully vaccinated international students once we've reached 70% full vaccination.</li><li>We recommend Australia establish mutual protocols for recognising vaccines based on advice of the World Health Organisation.</li></ul>



## Rebuild the sectors crushed by Covid-19

### University and research strategy

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Adequately resource Study NSW so we don't lose our competitive advantage.	<b>No progress made.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Support universities to offer hybrid learning in traditional courses, short courses and linkages with VET.	<b>Progress made – more support required from federal government:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All these ideas are discussed in the <u>NSW Higher Education Strategy Action Plan</u>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Meet funding gaps in support for medical technologies and pharmaceuticals sector to maintain competitive edge in clinical research.	<b>No progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• While some reforms to the <u>Research and Development Tax Incentive</u> took effect on July 1, funding gaps still need to be addressed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Targeted incentives for industry to partner on world leading technology – via Investment NSW.	<b>No progress made.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea. Incentives could include new tax-based incentives for industry to take on students, extending the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy to industry placements, subsidising the employment of PhD level graduates in industry through tax breaks.</li><li>• NSW Government should match the <u>Breakthrough Victoria Fund</u>.</li></ul>
Reform student visas, including work rights during and post-study, so we remain an attractive study destination.	<b>No progress made.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>

## Rebuild the sectors crushed by Covid-19

### Cultural and live performance sector strategy

To reopen and rebuild the cultural and live performance sector, organisers need crucial support to take risks putting on events. This is a sector that never got a chance to recover last year and early this year. While some of our actions are the subject of active advocacy, little progress has been made in this area.

To ensure the cultural and live performance sector can reopen with the rest of the state when we reach 70-80% full vaccination, financial support needs to be confirmed and put in place now.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Increase investment in major festivals and events.	<b>In consultation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Ease Covid-safe room capacity limits (4sqm rule) to improve viability of reopening.	<b>No progress made.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Extend Create NSW Stimulus Package for duration of the recovery while capacity restrictions remain.	<b>No progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No extension of the Create NSW Stimulus Package has been announced.</li><li>• Create NSW announced <u>\$388,000 funding through Service Needs Strategic Fund</u> has been made available to six peak art organisations to deliver professional development and capacity building.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Support and contribute to national insurance scheme for large scale events.	<b>In consultation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSW Government to underwrite communicable diseases insurance for the cultural and live performance sector to guarantee payments to artists and employees, following the cancellation or closure of an exhibition or event due to Covid-19 public health restrictions.</li></ul>

## Rebuild the sectors crushed by Covid-19

### Cultural and live performance sector strategy

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Extend Activate the City program beyond City of Sydney.	In consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Create a rolling calendar of events in closed high streets providing free to public outdoor entertainment.	In consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Expand funding to the existing Live and Local program.	No progress made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Relax restrictions on use of public sites to enable commercial events/activations in parks and outdoor spaces during the recovery period.	No progress made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>

## Rebuild the sectors crushed by Covid-19

### Visitor and experience industry strategy

We need to get this industry ready to spring back into action to welcome the world back as soon as we can. Again, we're currently advocating for several of our recommendations, but only a little progress has been made.

Government should be looking to announce vouchers and funding to support the visitor and experience industry as it begins to open when we reach 70-80% full vaccination. This is set to be as little as one month away.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Continue to offer vouchers to support our hospitality, entertainment and tourism businesses, and incentivise getting back into our CBDs through subsidised or free transport.	<b>Progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NSW government has announced <a href="#">Stay &amp; Rediscover</a> vouchers will be launched for accommodation providers in the City of Sydney when health advice changes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Government to continue to implement opportunities to reactivate the CBD as the lockdown is removed.</li></ul>
Support business event industry with an insurance scheme to cover both event cancellations as well as costs incurred due to postponements as a result of continued lockdowns.	<b>In consultation.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Ease the Covid-safe room capacity limits (4sqm rule) as soon as possible to improve the viability of reopening for a greater number of businesses.	<b>In consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Sydney Business Events Coalition, which the Committee is co-convening, has written to ministers to advocate for reopening events at one person per two square metres.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Introduce a Licensed Venue Grant Scheme, for all licensed venues scalable according to business size and capacity.	<b>No progress made.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>



A person wearing a blue protective suit, hood, and face shield is working in a laboratory biosafety cabinet. They are using a pipette to transfer liquid into a rack of syringes. The background shows another person in similar attire working in the same environment.

# > Moving into long term recovery

## Moving into long term recovery

# Shift to long-term management of Covid-19 as an endemic disease

There has been a lot of progress in this area, with a general acceptance now in NSW that Covid-zero is not a possibility. The Premier has led the way, reporting vaccination rates at the start of the daily press conference, instead of Covid-19 case numbers, and working to bring the community forward to the long-term settings that will be required.

On the road ahead, we're looking into developing mRNA vaccines here in NSW and have ordered booster shots for the coming years.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Shift emphasis of reporting to vaccinations, deaths and hospitalisation rates, rather than cases of Covid-19.	<b>Major progress made on shifting emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Premier has now shifted focus to reporting vaccination numbers, instead of case numbers, at the start of daily press conferences.</li><li>The Premier recently stated Covid-zero "<u>is just not possible.</u>"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue the great work to bring the community along.</li></ul>
Retool public health system to be more nimble in acquiring booster shots and vaccines for future diseases.	<b>Progress made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Federal Government has procured an additional <u>60 million Pfizer doses for next year, and another 25 million doses for 2023.</u></li><li>A <u>decision on how booster shots will be administered</u> may still be months away.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Longer-term questions about the health system remain to be examined.</li></ul>
Support development of onshore production capability for mRNA vaccines.	<b>Major progress made on shifting emphasis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Federal Government is assessing <u>10 bids from pharmaceutical companies proposing to manufacture mRNA vaccines in Australia</u> – including Australia's largest privately-owned pharmaceutical company, Arrotex Pharmaceuticals, based in NSW.</li><li>NSW Government and all NSW universities formed <u>NSW RNA Bioscience Alliance</u>, providing support for a new \$15 million NSW RNA Production and Research Network. The Alliance and Network will work closely with a new \$25 million RNA Institute established by UNSW Sydney.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An important priority until the deals are struck.</li></ul>

## Moving into long term recovery

### Revive town centres, even as remote work changes them

There will almost certainly be more remote work in the future than there was in the past. Nevertheless, town centres and CBDs will remain critical to Sydney's success. There will be both short-term and long-term work we need to do to ensure that our town centres and CBDs thrive in the post-Covid world.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Create a high streets / town centres renewal fund to create better pedestrian environments. LGAs would be able to apply for funds, administered by DPIE. We recommend \$1-2 billion over four years in next budget.	In consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Extend Fab Fridays lunch vouchers and Stay & Rediscover vouchers for use outside of the CBD (i.e. outside the 2000 postcode).	In consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Ease noise restrictions and licensing conditions to make it easier for venues to attract people.	No progress made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>
Fund cultural institutions to remain open later at night.	No progress made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Still a good idea.</li></ul>

## Moving into long term recovery

# Tell a more sophisticated story of Sydney

We're getting ready to reopen and recover soon. By mid-October it's expected we'll see high enough vaccination rates to start easing restrictions significantly. Sydney's brand faced limitations before Covid-19 – known internationally for our attractions and quality of life, it doesn't capture all we have to offer.

Australia has a good story to tell, and so does Sydney – one that has people at its heart, celebrating First Nations culture and immigrants from all over the world.

Actions	Progress	Remaining priorities
Go to the world with a coherent story about Sydney, tailored for all markets – tourist, student, business meeting, in-bound investment, talent attraction.	<b>Significant progress:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Destination NSW has been preparing major campaigns for Sydney and for NSW, which will roll out later this year and early next year.</li><li>• Investment NSW is managing other aspects of Sydney's global brand.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good progress, but further development and implementation still needed.</li></ul>
Set up a taskforce under Investment NSW focused on claiming NSW's place in the global imagination – going back for talent, investment and students poached away during Australia's long border closure.	<b>No progress made.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Still a good idea.</li></ul>



## Innovation Fund Partners

We would like to thank our Innovation Fund Partners for their support of the Committee for Sydney's research.

Our Innovation Fund Partners are future focused and outcome driven. They are leaders of change.

Their combined investment underpins our annual research program and together with our members, enables us to grow our impact and output – striving to create a better Sydney that offers unparalleled opportunity and quality of life for everyone.

We are proud to work with our Innovation Fund Partners: Dexus; ICC Sydney; McKinsey & Company; Housing and Property Group from the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment; Western Sydney University; and Campbelltown City Council.





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