

Information note – COVID-19 situation update

2 July 2021

This is a background document only and does not purport to be a comprehensive discussion of the issues involved. It does not represent the view of the Fair Work Commission on any issue.

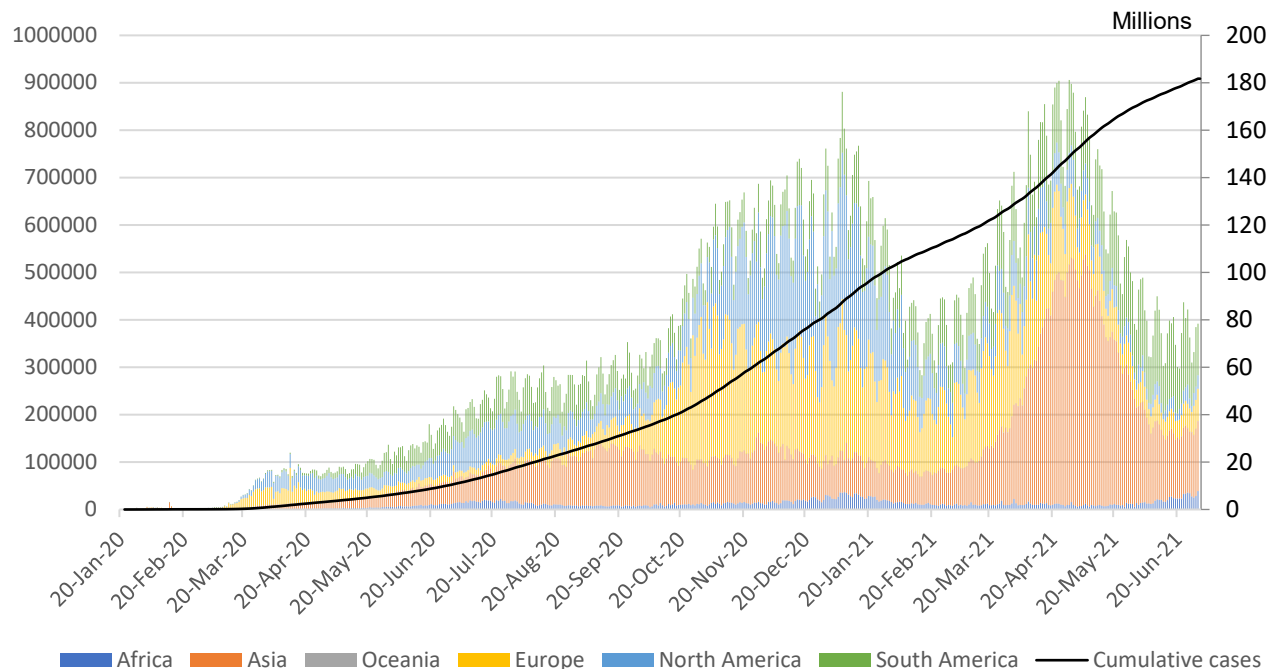
This information note provides an update of the current rate of transmission of COVID-19 in Australia and globally, as well as regarding the rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations in Australia.

Global COVID-19 statistics

According to John Hopkins University, as at 2 July 2021, there had been:¹

- 182 566 186 total cases of COVID-19; and
- 3 953 911 total deaths.

Chart 1: Daily and cumulative number of reported COVID-19 cases globally and by region



Note: Data by region is taken from Our World in Data using original data on case numbers from John Hopkins University.

Source: Roser M, Ritchie H, Ortiz-Ospina E, and Hasell J (2020) [Coronavirus Pandemic \(COVID-19\)](#), published online at OurWorldInData.org, updated 2 July 2021.

National COVID-19 statistics

The Commonwealth Department of Health provides a daily update on COVID-19 cases from when the first case of COVID-19 was detected in Australia in late January 2020.

¹ Johns Hopkins University (2021), [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), Center for Systems Science and Engineering, updated 2 July.

The data show that:

- As at 1 July 2021, Australia has had a total of 30 643 cases of COVID-19, 910 deaths and there are currently an estimated 339 active cases.
- In the previous 24 hours, there were 27 locally-acquired cases and 6 overseas-acquired cases were recorded.²

Within the Commonwealth Department of Health, the COVID-19 National Incident Room Surveillance Team has been releasing regular Epidemiology reports since the week of 26 January to 1 February 2020, based on data extracted from the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS).³ The latest of these reports covers the fortnightly reporting period ending 6 June 2021 and, based on data available at that time, found that the number of new cases reported nationally rose to 126 compared with 50 cases reported in the previous fortnight (9 May to 23 May 2021).⁴ There were 9 cases reported on average per day over the period, an increase from 4 in the previous fortnight. The largest number of cases diagnosed were in Victoria (92, or 73 per cent) and New South Wales (20, or 16 per cent).⁵

The latest epidemiology report noted, for the reporting period to 6 June 2021, that:

'In this reporting period, the majority of cases were reported as locally acquired (62%; 78/126), with nearly all of these cases from Victoria (77)...At the end of this reporting period, two cases were classified as under investigation...'⁶

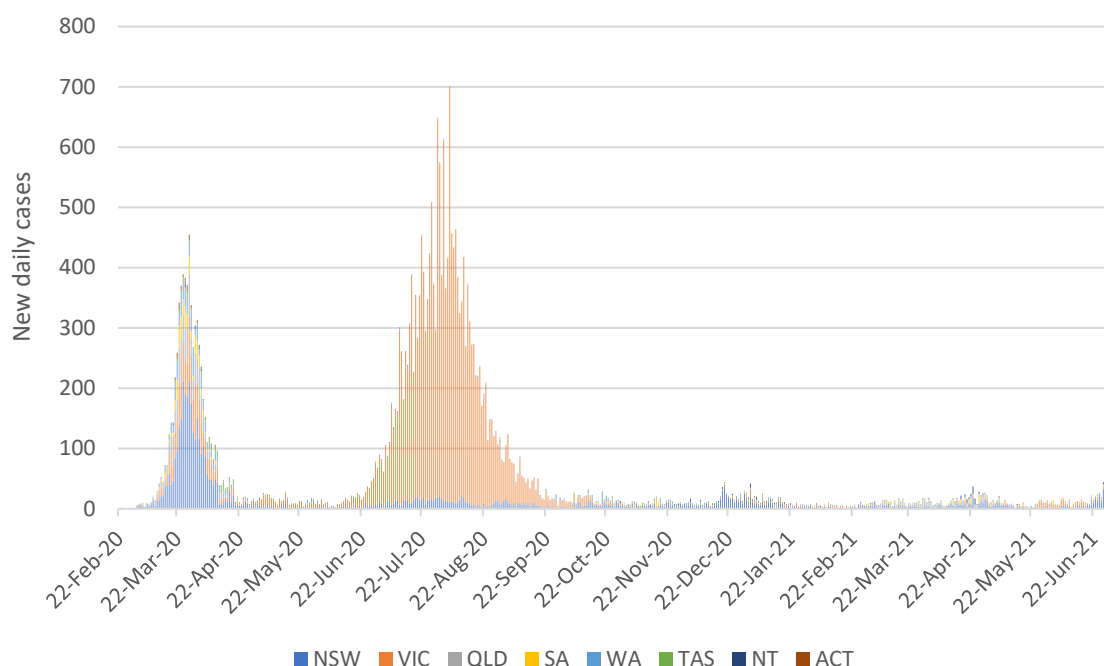
² Department of Health (2021), [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) current situation and case numbers](#), Commonwealth Government of Australia, 2 July.

³ Department of Health (2020), [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) epidemiology reports, Australia, 2020](#), Commonwealth Government of Australia, 22 July.

⁴ COVID-19 National Incident Room Surveillance Team (2021), [COVID-19, Australia: Epidemiology Report 43: Reporting fortnight ending 6 June 2021](#), Communicable Diseases Intelligence Volume 45, 21 June, p. 1; COVID-19 National Incident Room Surveillance Team (2021), [COVID-19, Australia: Epidemiology Report 42: Reporting fortnight ending 23 May 2021](#), Communicable Diseases Intelligence Volume 45, 10 May, p. 1.

⁵ COVID-19 National Incident Room Surveillance Team (2021), [COVID-19, Australia: Epidemiology Report 43: Reporting fortnight ending 6 June 2021](#), Communicable Diseases Intelligence Volume 45, 21 June, p. 2.

⁶ COVID-19 National Incident Room Surveillance Team (2021), [COVID-19, Australia: Epidemiology Report 43: Reporting fortnight ending 6 June 2021](#), Communicable Diseases Intelligence Volume 45, 21 June, p. 3.

Chart 2: New daily confirmed COVID-19 cases in Australia in states and territories

Note: The data are obtained from a variety of [state and commonwealth sources](#). Chart shows gross new daily cases as announced (not net added to total) except for Victoria, which shows true daily cases. To understand the term 'true daily cases' and see a comparison.

Source: [COVID-19 in Australia](#), covid19data.com.au, 2 July 2021.

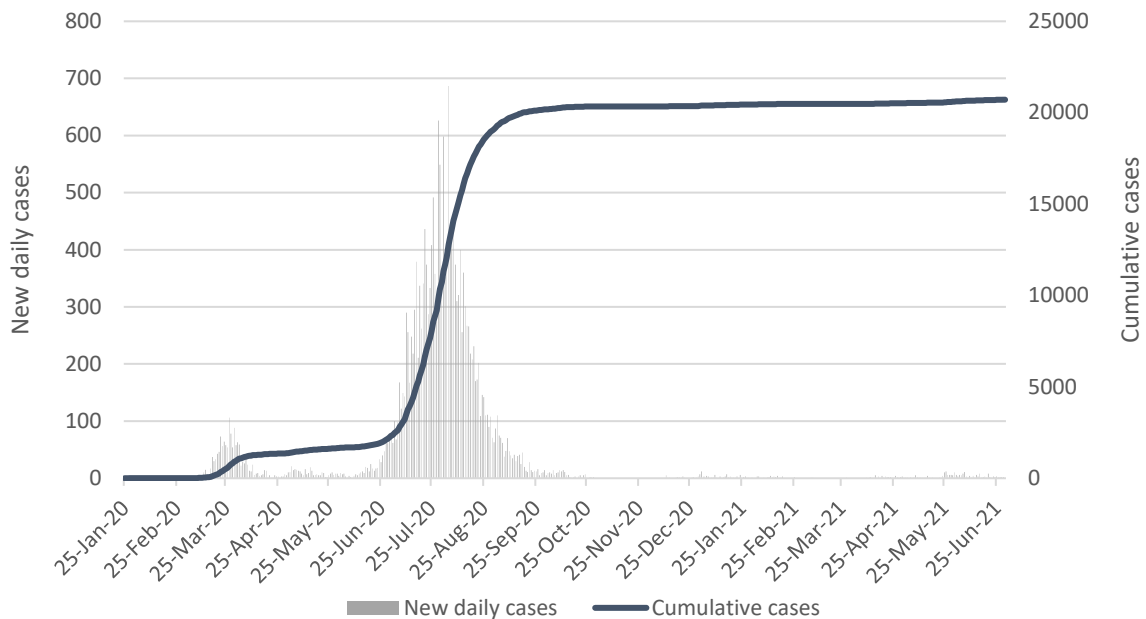
More recent data in Chart 2 show the significant increase in new daily cases in Australia in July and August 2020, which are mainly due to Victoria, as well as a small but sustained level of new daily cases recorded in New South Wales from late June. It also shows the decline in case numbers in September and October, largely due to continued decline in new cases in Victoria, which is likely associated with the restrictions in place at that time.⁷ It also reveals a slight uptick in new cases reported in New South Wales commencing in mid-December 2020 and declining in late January 2021. From late May to early July 2021 there was a slight uptick in reported daily cases, predominately in Victoria and New South Wales.

State outbreaks of COVID-19

Victoria

Chart 3 highlights the much larger number of cases recorded in Victoria between July and September 2020 than at the early stages of the epidemic in March 2020. It also shows that cases in Victoria peaked in early August 2020, steadily falling since then and achieving 41 consecutive days of zero cases to 10 December 2020. There were sustained but low numbers of new cases from 11 December 2020 to 19 January 2021, with zero or very low new cases reported from then until 25 May 2021, when 10 new cases were reported, and double-digit cases were reported a further 3 days to 10 June 2021.

⁷ COVID-19 National Incident Room Surveillance Team (2020), [COVID-19, Australia: Epidemiology Report 25: Reporting fortnight ending 13 September 2020](#), Communicable Diseases Intelligence Volume 44, 23 September, p. 1.

Chart 3: Daily and cumulative number of reported COVID-19 cases in Victoria

Source: Victorian Department of Health and Human Service, [Victorian coronavirus \(COVID-19\) data](#), last updated 1 July 2021.

On 21 June, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) released a statement on recent outbreaks of COVID-19 in Victoria, noting that due to the continued growth in confirmed cases overseas and the number of Australians still overseas who may return; as well as sporadic community transmission in Australia, that it remains probable that Australia will experience periodic outbreaks.⁸

On 20 June, the Victorian Government announced that it would not be easing restrictions as initially planned from 22 June because of the increase in cases. It also reimposed some restrictions, such as limiting the number of people you can have at your home to 5 persons and outdoor gatherings to 10 persons. Restaurants, pubs, auction halls, community halls, libraries, museums and places of worship were limited to a maximum of 20 people in any one space until 12 July and businesses including gyms, cinemas, theatres and TABs could remain open with a maximum of 20 people per space.⁹

The continued increase in daily cases (including community transmission) led to a number of areas in Melbourne to return to Stage 3 (Stay at Home) restrictions from 2 July. Further areas were added on 5 July, and this was extended to all of Metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire from 9 July. Under Stage 3 restrictions there are only 4 reasons to leave home: shopping for food and supplies; medical care and caregiving; exercise and recreation; and study and work (if it cannot be done from home). Businesses across these regions also returned to Stage 3 restrictions: restaurants and cafes returned to takeaway and delivery services only; beauty and personal services closed; entertainment and cultural venues closed; and community sport stopped.¹⁰

⁸ Department of Health (2020), [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\) statement on recent outbreaks of COVID-19 in Victoria](#), Commonwealth Government of Australia, 21 June.

⁹ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹⁰ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

On 19 July, the Victorian Government announced that, from 23 July, people living in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire must wear a face covering if they leave their home.¹¹ On 30 July, it was announced that from 31 July, people living in the local government areas of Greater Geelong, the Surf Coast, Moorabool, Golden Plains, Colac-Otway and Borough of Queenscliffe will no longer be able to have visitors at home, or visit other peoples' homes. From 3 August, face coverings became mandatory for all of Victoria.¹²

At 6pm on 2 August, Victoria entered into a state of disaster and Stage 4 restrictions were applied to Melbourne, initially until 13 September. These included a curfew from 8pm to 5am, with the only reason to leave home during these hours being for work, medical care and caregiving. Outside of curfew hours, the 4 reasons to leave home are to: exercise (limited to 1 hour a day and to a size of 2 people regardless of if you are in the same household or not); shopping for food and necessary supplies (limited to 1 person per household per day); care and health care; and work. Exercise and shopping for essentials must both be done within a 5km radius of home. Mitchell shire remained at Stage 3 restrictions and the rest of regional Victoria moved to Stage 3 restrictions from 6 August.¹³

On 3 August, further restrictions on businesses and workplaces were announced, commencing from 6 August. Those that can continue to operate are certain retail services (supermarkets, grocery stores, bottle shops, pharmacies, petrol stations, banks, news agencies and post offices) and those involved in the frontline health response. Other retail stores, some manufacturing and administration industries were to cease onsite operation for 6 weeks. Retail stores not specifically allowed to operate were permitted to operate on a contactless 'click and collect' and delivery services basis. Other businesses in the meat industry, warehousing and distribution centres and construction were subject to mandated reductions in onsite worker numbers. These workplaces were required to implement additional safety requirements, including extra personal protective equipment, staggered shifts and breaks, health declarations and more support for sick workers to stay at home. From 6 August, employees working in permitted industries who cannot work from home were required to have a new 'Worker Permit' when travelling to and from work. All open businesses and services had until 11:59pm Friday 7 August to enact a COVIDSafe plan.¹⁴

On 6 September, the Victorian Government announced a roadmap for reopening, with separate roadmaps for metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Each roadmap had 4 steps towards reaching a 'COVID normal' and progressing through each step was largely triggered by the later of planned dates and when the number of new cases reaches established thresholds. Metropolitan Melbourne moved to the Second Step of the roadmap on 14 September, allowing 'single social bubbles' and increased daily exercise from 1 hour to 2 hours, with the curfew commencing from 9pm.¹⁵

Regional Victoria moved to the Third Step of the roadmap on 17 September which included: no restrictions on reasons to leave home or the distance that can be travelled; public gatherings with up to 10 people; 'household bubbles' with visitors allowed with one nominated household (up to 5 visitors at a time); childcare and early educators open; staggered return to onsite learning; no time limit for outdoor exercise and recreation; restaurants and cafes open with a group limit of

¹¹ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹² Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹³ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹⁴ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹⁵ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

10 people and density limits; retail open; travel within Victoria allowed (except to or through metropolitan Melbourne); and accommodation open with capacity limits.¹⁶

The ability to move to next steps was largely based on the average number of cases over a 14-day period. In order for metropolitan Melbourne to move to the Second Step of the roadmap, the 14-day average had to be between 30 to 50 cases.¹⁷ The state-wide 14-day average was 18.8 on 28 September. On 27 September, the Victorian Government announced that metropolitan Melbourne would move to the Second Step towards reopening from 28 September. Based on public health advice, some further easing of restrictions beyond those initially planned in the roadmap to recovery were announced, such as the removal of the curfew, expanded workforce limits in some industries (such as supermarkets, food distribution, abattoirs and manufacturing) and weddings allowed with up to 5 people.¹⁸ Further, it was announced that future progression through the Third and Last Steps will no longer be defined by dates in the roadmap, but instead by trigger points that are solely based on case number targets.¹⁹

From 19 October, further restrictions were eased under an amended Second Step for metropolitan Melbourne and an amended Third Step for regional Victoria. For metropolitan Melbourne, the changes included extending the travel limit from home or your place of work to 25 kilometres, allowing outside gatherings of up to 10 people from a maximum of 2 households, hairdressers opening, some real estate activities allowed, and groups of up to 5 workers for certain low risk outdoor work allowed. The move to the Third Step was expected to occur on 2 November, subject to a public health assessment.²⁰

For regional Victoria, up to 2 people can visit a household once per day, group limits of 10 for hospitality, with density limits and indoor cap of 40 patrons and an outdoor cap of 70 patrons, indoor pools open (including swimming classes) for people aged up to 18 years and outdoor religious gatherings of up to 20 people allowed proximate to places of worship (plus a faith leader).²¹

Declining case numbers and the 14-day moving average falling below 5 cases led to metropolitan Melbourne moving to the Third Step towards reopening on 28 October. This included no restrictions on the reasons to leave home, up to 2 people from the same household can visit or be visited by another household once a day, up to 10 people from any number of households able to meet outside in public, all retail open, and hospitality allowed seated service for up to 20 patrons indoors and 50 patrons outdoors (subject to limits and density requirements).²²

From 28 October, regional Victoria had further restrictions eased under the Third Step. These include opening food courts (subject to specific density limits); indoor physical recreation and non-contact sports for those aged 18 years or younger (with certain caps); indoor fitness and fitness classes with up to 10 people in a space and 20 people in a venue for adults (subject to

¹⁶ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹⁷ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹⁸ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

¹⁹ Government of Victoria (2020), [Statement from the Premier](#), media release, 27 September.

²⁰ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

²¹ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

²² Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

density limits); indoor pools open with a maximum of 20 people (subject to density limits); and funerals allowed up to 50 people outdoors.²³

For 10 consecutive days to 9 November 2020, zero new cases of COVID-19 were recorded in Victoria, with the 14-day moving average approaching zero. As a result, from 9 November, restrictions were further eased across the state in addition to those previously announced. These included: up to 2 adults allowed to visit a household per day; for adults, indoor physical recreation with density limits and a patron cap of 10 per space and 20 per venue; indoor skateparks, playcentres and trampoline centres open to people aged 18 years and under with a maximum of 20 patrons, subject to density limits; food and drink facilities open for seated service subject to a maximum of 40 patrons for indoor venues and a maximum of 70 patrons per outdoor venue (subject to density limits); and workforce caps removed for abattoirs and meat, seafood and poultry processing.²⁴

Victoria recorded no new cases of COVID-19 for 24 consecutive days to 22 November, with the 14-day moving average being zero since 12 November. Subsequently, from 23 November restrictions were further eased with up to 15 people able to visit a household, the outdoor public gathering limit increased to 50 people, hospitality venues able to have up to 150 patrons indoors and 300 outdoors (subject to density limits based on the size of venues); weddings and funerals able to have a maximum of 150 people, and large multipurpose sporting facilities to have a cap of 25 per cent. From 30 November, workplaces currently working from home could have up to 25 per cent of their workforce per site (subject to density limits).²⁵

On 6 December, the Victorian Government announced further easing of restrictions, effective from 7 December, that included allowing up to 30 visitors to households, 100 people to gather in public spaces; venues to have no maximum patron cap and instead capacity to be determined by density limits.²⁶

Victoria recorded no new cases of COVID-19 for 41 consecutive days to 10 December. From 11 December 2020, there were small numbers of new daily cases, peaking around the new year (8 cases on 31 December 2020 and 11 cases on 1 January 2021). As a result, from 31 December 2020, wearing face masks when indoors became mandatory and a limit of 15 persons per day for visits to homes was implemented.²⁷ From 13 February 2021, Stage 4 restrictions returned to Victoria for 5 days.²⁸ From 18 February 2021, most of the Stage 4 restrictions were removed²⁹ and from 27 February 2021, restrictions were further eased, including allowing offices to return to a capacity of 75 per cent for both the public and private sectors; up to 75 per cent capacity for seated entertainment venues (indoors and outdoors) with a maximum of 1000 people; and up to 50 per cent capacity for non-seated indoor venues with a maximum of 1000 people. Density limits of

²³ Government of Victoria (2020), [Victoria's roadmap for reopening – How we live in regional Victoria](#), updated 26 October.

²⁴ Government of Victoria (2020), [Summary of statewide restrictions for the Third Step and Last Step of Victoria's roadmap to reopening](#), updated 8 November.

²⁵ Government of Victoria (2020), [Summary of Last Step Restrictions from 11.59pm on 22 November 2020](#), 22 November.

²⁶ Government of Victoria (2020), [COVIDSafe Summer – How we live in Victoria](#), accessed 8 December 2020.

²⁷ Government of Victoria (2020), [Statement from Acting Premier on NSW Border Closure](#), 31 December.

²⁸ Government of Victoria (2021), [Statement from the Premier](#), 17 February.

²⁹ Government of Victoria (2021), [Statement from the Premier](#), 17 February.

1 person per 2 square metres also remained in place for a number of venues and businesses including hospitality venues and indoor and outdoor physical recreation spaces.³⁰

From 9 April 2021, Victoria increased to 100 per cent capacity of seated indoor and outdoor entertainment, cultural, and sporting venues with up to 1000 patrons per venue. Additionally, density quotients were removed for all office-based workplaces (both public and private sector), meaning offices may return to 100 per cent capacity.³¹

From 25 May 2021, restrictions were introduced for Greater Melbourne, including mandatory use of masks indoors; a limit of 5 visitors per day for private gatherings in the home; and a 30-person limit for public gatherings. From 27 May 2021, Victoria moved to circuit-breaker restrictions, with only five reasons to leave the home (food and supplies; authorised work; care and caregiving; exercise for up to 2 hours (with 1 other person); and receiving a COVID-19 vaccination). Private and public gatherings are not permitted.³²

[From 4 June 2021](#), restrictions were eased in regional Victoria, including: no restrictions on reasons to leave the home or distance travelled from the home; outdoor gatherings limited to 10 people; food and hospitality open for seated service with a cap of 50 people per venue and subject to 1 person per 4 square metres; personal services may operate where masks can be used; religious gatherings and ceremonies permitted with a limit of 50 people; weddings limited to 10 people; funerals limited to 50 people; and, outdoor entertainment has a patron cap of 50 people or 50 per cent of the venue's seated capacity (whichever is lower).³³

[From 11 June 2021](#), for regional Victoria restrictions were further eased including: private gatherings in the home limited to 2 people per day; public gatherings limited to 20 people; religious gatherings and ceremonies permitted for up to 50 people; fixed-seating entertainment may operate at 50 per cent capacity (up to a maximum of 75 people for indoor venues and 150 people for outdoor venues); indoor non-seated entertainment venues may open with a limit of 75 people; and outdoor venues open subject to a 1 person per 4 square metres density rule.³⁴ For metropolitan Melbourne, eased restriction settings included: no restrictions on reasons to leave home; travel radius extended to 25km; outdoor gatherings allowed with up to 10 people; retail open, subject to 1 person per 4 square metres; weddings allowed with a maximum 10 people, and a maximum of 50 people for funerals and religious ceremonies; and food and drink facilities and food courts (hospitality) open for seated service only, with a cap of 100 people per venue, 50 people indoors, and a group cap of 10 people (subject to the density rule).³⁵

From 18 June 2021, restrictions were eased in metropolitan Melbourne, with remaining restrictions including a limit of 20 people for public gatherings; office capacity limited to 50 per cent; density limits for shops and indoor seated venues.³⁶

³⁰ Government of Victoria (2021), [Statement from the Premier](#), 26 February; Government of Victoria (2021), [Covidsafe settings](#), 26 February

³¹ Government of Victoria (2021), [Statement from the Premier](#), 9 April.

³² Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

³³ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

³⁴ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

³⁵ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

³⁶ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

From 25 June 2021, restrictions were further eased in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, including: a limit of 15 visitors to the home per day; gatherings of up to 50 people permitted; offices able to return to 75 per cent capacity or 30 people (whichever is greater); restaurants and cafes permitted 300 people for seated service with density limits; and entertainment venues allowed 75 per cent seated capacity and up to 300 people per indoor space.³⁷

New South Wales

Chart 4 shows the daily new cases and cumulative cases of COVID-19 recorded in NSW. It shows that although the numbers of cases are lower than the peak of the epidemic in March and April 2020, there was a gradual increase in new daily cases in June and July. In response, the NSW government announced that from 17 July there would be restrictions to group bookings at pubs to a maximum of 10 people (down from 20) and a cap of 300 people inside a venue at any time was introduced. Further tightening of restrictions took effect from 24 July, with the limit of 10 people per group booking extended to restaurants, bars and cafés: a limit of 150 people for weddings and corporate events (subject to the 4 square metre rule); and a limit of 100 people for funerals and places of worship (subject to the 4 square metre rule) also imposed.³⁸ From 1 August, a limit of 20 people applied to gym and recreation classes such as yoga, tai chi and Pilates. Community sporting activities that involve more than 20 participants must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan and the maximum number of participants must not exceed 500.³⁹

From 22 July, people seeking to enter New South Wales from Victoria required an entry permit⁴⁰ and could only enter for essential travel, with some exceptions. Victorian residents living in metropolitan Melbourne or the Mitchell Shire were not eligible for entry permits.⁴¹ On 5 August, it was announced that from 7 August, New South Wales residents returning from Victoria must go into 14 days of mandatory hotel quarantine at their own expense. Some entry permits may indicate requirements on them entering New South Wales (such as needing to self-isolate). Chart 4 shows signs of decreasing daily cases numbers from mid-August, an increase in early September and then a return to declining case numbers throughout the rest of September. In line with declining case numbers, the New South Wales Government further eased restrictions, including: allowing more than one parent to attend community sporting activities from 26 September;⁴² theatres, cinemas and concert halls allowed an increased capacity to 50 per cent from 28 September;⁴³ and increasing the limit on sporting crowds at stadiums from 25 per cent to 40 per cent capacity (to a maximum of 40 000) from 1 October.⁴⁴

From 16 October, people entering from New Zealand do not need to enter mandatory quarantine upon arrival. Outdoor music rehearsals and performances can have up to 500 people in public places. Hospitality venues that use electronic systems for registering contact details of patrons may

³⁷ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

³⁸ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

³⁹ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁴⁰ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁴¹ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁴² Government of New South Wales (2020), [School, sport and music restrictions relaxed](#), 24 September.

⁴³ Government of New South Wales (2020), [Capacity increase for entertainment venues](#), 25 September.

⁴⁴ Government of New South Wales (2020), [Stadiums and economy to benefit from increased capacity](#), 17 September.

apply a density rule of 1 person per 2 square metres for outdoor areas. Corporate events, weddings, funerals and religious services that use electronics system for registering patron details can have up to 300 people for corporate events, 150 people for weddings and 100 people for funeral and religious services.⁴⁵

From 23 October outdoor gatherings in public spaces and group bookings at restaurants will be increased to 30 people and from 1 December, the number of people who can attend a wedding will be increased to 300 people (subject to indoor and outdoor density limits). From 23 November, the border to Victoria reopened.⁴⁶

From 7 December, restrictions were further eased including the removal of maximum venue caps replaced by density limits for gyms and night clubs, and up to 5000 people allowed for outdoor events that are fenced, ticketed and seated.⁴⁷

In mid-December 2020, New South Wales began recording increasing numbers of new daily COVID-19 cases, peaking at 36 cases on 20 December 2020. Initially, the majority of cases were linked to Sydney's Northern Beaches, before growing to include the Greater Sydney region. In response, on 19 December 2020, the New South Wales Government imposed a stay-at-home order for Sydney's Northern Beaches, preventing people who reside in that area or had been in that area between 10 December and 19 December 2020 from leaving home other than for certain essential activities.⁴⁸

From 3 January 2021, new rules and restrictions were put in place for Greater Sydney, Central Coast and Wollongong including mandatory wearing of face masks in certain indoor premises, limiting attendance at weddings, funerals and religious services, gym classes, and small venues subject to density limits and caps for outdoor events. Also from 3 January, restrictions were implemented for regional and rural New South Wales residents, such as having a maximum of 50 visitors to a household (with no daily limit), no more than 100 people able to gather outside in public and indoor and outdoor density limits for venues. From 10 January 2021, restrictions in the northern area of the Northern Beaches were eased to align with those for the Greater Sydney area.⁴⁹ Restrictions were further eased from 29 January 2021, including up to 30 people may visit another household; up to 50 people can gather in a public place; a maximum of 300 people can attend a wedding or funeral (subject to density limits); and up to 25 people are allowed at hospitality venues before a limit of 1 person per 4 square metres applies.⁵⁰

Case numbers continued to decline into early February (0 new locally-acquired cases were recorded for 54 days between 17 January and 12 March 2021),⁵¹ which allowed for a further easing of restrictions. From 12 February 2021, the Greater Sydney Region, including Wollongong, Central Coast and Blue Mountains, moved to having 1 person per 2 square metres at all venues (except

⁴⁵ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁴⁶ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁴⁷ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁴⁸ Government of New South Wales (2021), [Restrictions for Greater Sydney, Central Coast and Wollongong](#), updated 9 January.

⁴⁹ Government of New South Wales (2021), [What you can and can't do under the rules](#), updated 12 January.

⁵⁰ Government of New South Wales (2021), [COVID-19 restrictions update for Greater Sydney](#), 27 January.

⁵¹ New South Wales Government, [NSW COVID-19 cases data](#), Data.NSW, last updated 18 March 2021.

gyms).⁵² Restrictions were further eased on 26 February 2021 for Greater Sydney, Central Coast and Wollongong, with the number of people allowed to visit a home or gather outside in a public place increased to 50; capacity at cinemas increased to 100 per cent of fixed seating; the maximum number of people attending a controlled outdoor event subject to 1 person per 2 square metres for up to 500 people when people are assigned to a seating area and up to 2000 people when people are assigned a specific seat.⁵³

From 29 March 2021, restrictions were further eased across New South Wales, including no caps on weddings and funerals or visitors to the home (if there are more than 100 people a COVID-19 Safety Plan is required with electronic recording of visitor details); 200 people allowed for personal outdoor public gatherings; all venues to move to the rule of 1 person per 2 square metres (venues allowed at least 25 people before the rule applies); 100 per cent seated capacity at entertainment venues (including sports and theatre); and masks “strongly recommended” on public transport.⁵⁴

From 6 May 2021, a number of restrictions were introduced for the Greater Sydney region (including Woollongong, Central Coast, and Blue Mountains), including a 20-person limit on visitors to households and mandatory use of masks on public transport and in all indoor venues.⁵⁵

From 4pm on 23 June 2021, restrictions were introduced for Greater Sydney, the Central Coast, Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour, including limits on visitors to households; and density limits for all settings.⁵⁶ From 26 June 2021, residents of, or people whose usual place of work is in, 4 local governments areas must follow stay-at-home orders, with only 4 reasons to leave the home.⁵⁷ From 28 June 2021, restrictions were placed on all other parts of New South Wales.⁵⁸

⁵² Government of New South Wales (2021), [COVID-19 restrictions update for Greater Sydney](#), 10 February.

⁵³ Government of New South Wales (2021), [Restrictions for Greater Sydney, Central Coast and Wollongong](#), updated 25 February.

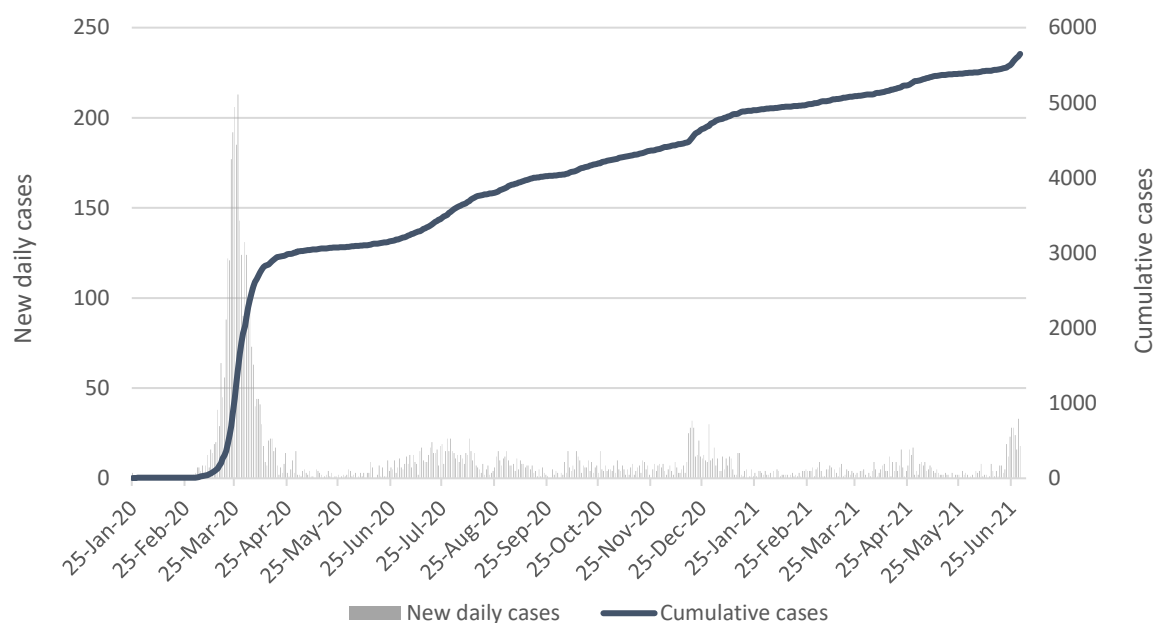
⁵⁴ Government of New South Wales (2021), [COVID-19 restrictions to ease but compliance must increase](#), 24 March.

⁵⁵ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁵⁶ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note – government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁵⁷ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note – government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁵⁸ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note – government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

Chart 4: Daily and cumulative number of reported COVID-19 cases in NSW

Note: Case counts reported by NSW Health for a particular notification date may vary over time due to ongoing investigations and the outcome of cases under review, thus this dataset and any historical data contained within is subject to change on a daily basis.

Source: New South Wales Government, [NSW COVID-19 cases data](#), Data.NSW, last updated 1 July 2021.

South Australia

South Australia experienced a spike in community transmission of COVID-19 in mid-November. This peaked at 18 new cases reported on 16 November 2020⁵⁹ and led to the South Australian Government increasing restrictions on 17 November and again on 19 November (initially for 6 days).⁶⁰ Following contact tracing investigations,⁶¹ and with cases dropping to below 5 per day from 18 November,⁶² restrictions were eased from 22 November.⁶³ Restrictions were further eased from 4 December, including a density limit of 1 person per 2 square metres for hospitality venues replacing the previous 1 person per 4 square metres. Further easing from 14 December included private functions subject to a limit of 200 people (including weddings and funerals) and up to 50 people may attend a gathering at a private residence.

From 26 February 2021, events and nightclubs were permitted to have up to 1000 patrons with an approved COVID Management Plan; and, entertainment venues may increase capacity to 75 per cent (with mandatory use of masks indoors).⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Government of South Australia (2020), [Dashboard table data: Daily cases - SA](#), 22 November.

⁶⁰ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁶¹ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁶² Government of South Australia (2020), [Dashboard table data: Daily cases - SA](#), 22 November.

⁶³ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁶⁴ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

From 31 March 2021, the density limit moved from 1 person per 2 square metres to 3 people per 4 square metres; and capacity increased from 75 per cent to 100 per cent for cinemas, live theatres, performance venues and places of worship with fixed seating.⁶⁵

From 30 June 2021, restrictions were introduced in South Australia including density limits and mandatory use of masks in high-risk settings.⁶⁶

Queensland

In response to new cases of COVID-19 at the beginning of January 2021, including one case of the highly infectious UK strain, the Queensland Government implemented a 3-day lockdown of the Greater Brisbane region from 8 January to 11 January 2021.⁶⁷ Residents of Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, Redlands and Logan were required to stay at home except to: attend work (if they could not work from home); buy essential groceries and medicine; look after the vulnerable; or exercise locally. Cafes, pubs and restaurants were open for takeaway service only, and face masks became mandatory when outside of home. These restrictions were eased on 11 January⁶⁸ including: businesses and venues allowed to have patrons based on a density limit of 1 person per 2 square metres outdoors and 1 person per 4 square metres indoors; a limit of 20 people in homes and public spaces; and indoor and outdoor events subject to various capacity and density limits based on differing degrees of COVID-safe preparedness and public health approval.⁶⁹ From 22 January, Greater Brisbane was subject to the same restriction as the rest of Queensland.⁷⁰ From 13 March, gatherings at private properties were allowed to have up to 100 people; and gatherings in public outdoor spaces increased to 500 people.⁷¹

From 29 March 2021, the Greater Brisbane region entered a 3-day lockdown, and restrictions across the rest of Queensland were increased. The restrictions in the Greater Brisbane region included a directive to stay at home (except for valid reasons), and the temporary closure of non-essential businesses. The lockdown ended on 1 April 2021, however, certain restrictions remained across Queensland, such as limited numbers for gatherings and certain venues being required to adhere to the rule of 1 person per 2 square metres.

From 15 April, 2021, restrictions were further eased, including gatherings in private residences may increase to 100 people; no restrictions on the amount of people that can gather in public spaces; and all restrictions on outdoor businesses removed, with the exception of dance and music festivals.⁷²

⁶⁵ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁶⁶ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁶⁷ Queensland Government (2021), [Positive case confirmed with UK strain of COVID-19](#), media release, 7 January; Queensland Government (2021), [Urgent Steps to Keep Queensland Safe](#), media release, 8 January.

⁶⁸ Queensland Government (2021), [Greater Brisbane lockdown ends tonight](#), media release, 11 January.

⁶⁹ Queensland Government (2021), [Roadmap to easing restrictions](#), updated 12 January.

⁷⁰ Queensland Government (2021), [Greater Brisbane restriction set to ease](#), media statement, 21 January.

⁷¹ Queensland Government (2021), [Going out, travel, recreation and gathering in Queensland](#), updated 13 March.

⁷² Queensland Government (2021), [COVID-19 update](#), update 15 April

From 1 May 2021, restrictions were further eased, including all indoor businesses subject to a density limit of 1 person per 2 square metres density rule or 100 per cent capacity with ticketed and allocated seating (whichever is greater).⁷³

From 6am on 28 June 2021, restrictions were imposed limiting the number of people at private gatherings; density limits for all indoor settings; and limits on the number of people at indoor weddings and funerals. Further restrictions were imposed from 1am on 29 June 2021 in South East Queensland and then from 6pm on 29 June 2021 there were only 4 reasons to leave the home for South East Queensland, Townsville (including Magnetic Island) and Palm Island.⁷⁴

Western Australia

[From 31 January 2021](#), the Perth Metropolitan area, as well as the Peel and South West regions, entered a 5-day lockdown period in response to a positive case from a hotel quarantine worker.⁷⁵ Residents were required to stay at home unless they needed to: work (if unable to work from home); do essential shopping; leave for medical reasons; or exercise with one other person (limited to one hour per day).⁷⁶ Restaurants, bars and cafes were only allowed to provide takeaway services; and gyms, indoor sporting venues, playgrounds, outdoor recreational facilities, cinemas, entertainment venues, casinos, beauty therapy services, large religious gatherings and places of worship, libraries and cultural institutions were closed.⁷⁷

After no new cases of community transmission,⁷⁸ there was a 'post lockdown transition period' from 5 February to 14 February 2021. Under the transition period, all businesses could reopen (except casinos and nightclubs); a rule of 1 person per 4 square metres and a 150-person capacity limit applied to all hospitality, entertainment, and fitness venues, as well as weddings and funerals; only seating services were permitted at hospitality venues; a 20 person limit was imposed for private gatherings (indoors and outdoors); and only essential travel was allowed in and out of the Perth and Peel regions.⁷⁹ From 14 February 2021, all locked down areas returned to pre-lockdown rules.⁸⁰

From 10 April 2021, certain indoor and outdoor venues with fixed seating, including auditoriums, amphitheatres, concert halls, theatres, cinemas, comedy lounges, and performing arts centres, increased to 100 per cent capacity; places of worship can operate at 100 per cent capacity.⁸¹

From 24 April 2021, the Perth Metropolitan area and Peel Region entered a three day lockdown.⁸² The measures implemented included mandatory use of masks; entry restrictions into the locked down areas; takeaway services only for restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars; closure of casinos and entertainment venues; community sports, funerals and weddings prohibited (exceptions apply); no

⁷³ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁷⁴ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁷⁵ Western Australian Government (2021), [Western Australia enters five-day lockdown from 6pm tonight](#), 31 January

⁷⁶ Western Australian Government (2021), [Western Australia enters five-day lockdown from 6pm tonight](#), 31 January.

⁷⁷ Western Australian Government (2021), [Western Australia enters five-day lockdown from 6pm tonight](#), 31 January.

⁷⁸ Western Australian Government (2021), [COVID-19 update 1- 5 February 2021](#), accessed 19 March.

⁷⁹ Western Australian Government (2021), [Post lockdown plan to come into effect 6pm, Friday, February 5](#), 4 February.

⁸⁰ Western Australian Government (2021), [Return to pre-lockdown life from 12.01am Sunday, February 14](#), 12 February.

⁸¹ Western Australian Government (2021), [WA's strong COVID-19 position allows for more positive changes](#), 9 April

⁸² Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

visitors allowed to the home (exceptions apply); restrictions on travel to certain Aboriginal communities; and, cancellation of all Anzac Day services.

From 27 April, 2021, the Perth Metropolitan area and Peel Region entered a transition period until 1 May.⁸³ From 8 May, restrictions were further eased, however, a number remained, including: masks to be worn in certain circumstances; a maximum of 100 people permitted for private gatherings in homes; up to 500 people for private gathering in public areas; events with over 500 people subject to a 1 person per 2 square metre density rule (up to a maximum of 10 000 people); weddings and funerals capped at 200 guests and subject to the 1 person per 2 metre density rule; certain seated indoor and outdoor venues with ticketed fixed seating (such as theatres and cinemas) permitted to operate at 100 per cent of the fixed seat capacity and others to operate at 75 per cent of their seated capacity; the 1 person per 2 square metre rule applies for all other venues, such as nightclubs galleries, museums, libraires, and sport and recreation facilities.⁸⁴ From 15 May, 2021, the Perth Metropolitan area and Peel Region returned to pre-lockdown rules.⁸⁵

From 12pm on 27 June 2021, restrictions were introduced in the Perth metropolitan region and Peel Region and then entered a 4-day lockdown from 29 June 2021 to 3 July 2021, with limited reasons to leave home.⁸⁶

Vaccinations

[On 7 January 2021](#), the Prime Minister stated that Australia's vaccination rollout will have 5 phases of priority populations to receive vaccinations over 2021. He also stated that the aim would be to administer around 80 000 vaccinations a week initially, with that figure building up over 4 to 6 weeks with a target of reaching 4 million people by the end of March.⁸⁷

Australia's COVID-19 vaccination rollout began on 22 February 2021.⁸⁸ The vaccines will be rolled out in three phases based on priority. Phase 1a includes approximately 678 000 people comprised of quarantine and border workers; frontline health care workers (priority based); aged care and disability care staff and residents. Phase 1b⁸⁹ began on 22 March 2021,⁹⁰ and covers approximately 6.1 million people that include people aged 70 years and above; other health care workers; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 55 years; younger adults with an underlying medical condition (including those with a disability); and critical and high risk workers. Phase 2a began on 3 May 2021, and covers approximately 6.6 million people and will include people between the ages 50 and 69 years; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between the ages of 18 and 54; and other critical and high-risk workers. Phase 2b (start date unconfirmed), of approximately 6.6 million people, will vaccinate the remaining balance of the adult population. Finally, Phase 3 will vaccinate (if recommended) all people under the age of 18 years

⁸³ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁸⁴ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁸⁵ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁸⁶ Fair Work Commission (2021), [Information note - government responses to COVID-19 pandemic](#), updated 2 July.

⁸⁷ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [Press Conference - Australian Parliament House](#), 7 January.

⁸⁸ Department of Health (2021), [First COVID-19 vaccinations in Australia](#), 21 February.

⁸⁹ Department of Health (2021), [COVID-19 vaccination – Phase 1b rollout](#), updated 17 March.

⁹⁰ Department of Health (2021), [Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccination rollout begins](#), 22 March

(approximately 5.7 million people).⁹¹ The initial timeline of the rollout was to offer a vaccine to all Australians by the end of October 2021.⁹²

Australia entered into four separate agreements for the supply of COVID-19 vaccines.⁹³ These agreements are with Pfizer-BioNtech, originally for 10 million doses and subsequently increased by an additional 10 million doses;⁹⁴ AstraZeneca for 53.8 million doses; Novavax for 51 million doses; and COVAX Facility for a range of vaccines and number of doses.

According to figures from the Commonwealth Department of Health, on 30 June 2021:⁹⁵

- 7 806 975 vaccine doses had been administered;
 - 29.63 per cent of the population aged 16 years and over had received 1 dose;
 - 7.92 per cent of the population aged 16 years and over had received 2 doses;
- Victoria and NSW have administered the most vaccine doses, with 1 101 572 and 851 400 doses, respectively; and
- the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory have administered the least number of vaccine doses, with 85 068 and 61 222 doses, respectively.

On 8 April 2021, the Commonwealth Government announced that, on the advice of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine is now the recommended vaccine for adults under 50 years.⁹⁶ The recommendation was based on the increased risk of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia following AstraZeneca vaccinations among those under 50 years. Where the benefit outweighs the risk, the AstraZeneca vaccine may be used for certain adults under 50 years.

On 9 April 2021, the Commonwealth Government announced it would continue the Australian Vaccination Strategy for groups under Phase 1a and 1b, however, that future phases will require a recalibration in light of the ATAGI recommendation.⁹⁷ Additionally, it was also announced that the Commonwealth Government had secured an additional 20 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine, bringing the total to 40 million. The additional doses are anticipated to arrive in Australia in the December quarter of 2021.⁹⁸

On 22 April 2021, National Cabinet agreed to limit access to the Pfizer vaccine to: people aged under 50 years in eligible phases 1a and 1b; residential aged care residents; disability care residents with complex needs; certain people in remote and very remote communities; and, in very limited circumstances, to quarantine, border force, and health workers 50 years and older not already vaccinated. Additionally, access to the AstraZeneca vaccine for phase 2a eligible people between the ages of 50 and 69 years was brought forward, beginning from 3 May 2021 for General

⁹¹ Department of Health (2021), [Australia's COVID-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy](#), accessed 17 March.

⁹² Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [First COVID-19 Vaccinations](#), 21 February.

⁹³ Department of Health (2021), [Australia's vaccine agreements](#), updated 9 April.

⁹⁴ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [Press Conference – Australian Parliament House ACT](#), 9 April.

⁹⁵ Department of Health (2021), [Getting vaccinated for COVID-19](#), updated 11 June.

⁹⁶ Department of Health (2021), [Joint statement on COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine advice from ATAGI](#), 8 March.

⁹⁷ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [National Cabinet Statement](#), 9 April.

⁹⁸ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [Press Conference – Australian Parliament House, ACT](#), 9 April.

Practice Respiratory Clinics and state and territory vaccination centres, and from 17 May 2021 for General Practice Clinics.⁹⁹

On 13 May, 2021, the Commonwealth Government announced that subject to approval from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), it had secured 25 million doses of the Moderna vaccine.¹⁰⁰ The agreement consists of 10 million doses in 2021 and 15 million doses of Moderna's updated variant booster vaccine in 2022.

According to the 2021–22 Commonwealth Budget, a key assumption underpinning its economic forecasts is that '[i]t is assumed that a population-wide vaccination program is likely to be in place by the end of 2021'.¹⁰¹ On 12 May 2021, the Prime Minister clarified that '...there's a general assumption of a vaccination program likely to be in place ... by the end of this year' and 'an understanding that over the course of this year the vaccination program will continue to roll out, and will reach as many Australians as we possibly can that want to have that vaccine'.¹⁰² Chart 5 shows the daily vaccination doses in Australia since 22 February 2021, as well as the cumulative total and shows that the number of vaccination doses administered per day has been steadily increasing since mid-May 2021.

On 28 June 2021, National Cabinet noted that the Commonwealth will establish a COVID-19 professional indemnity scheme covering COVID-19 vaccines approved by the TGA and approved for use in the vaccine program.¹⁰³ Additionally, National Cabinet agreed to mandate that at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine be administered by mid-September 2021 for all residential aged care workers.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [National Cabinet](#), 22 April

¹⁰⁰ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [Australia Secures Moderna Vaccines](#), 13 May

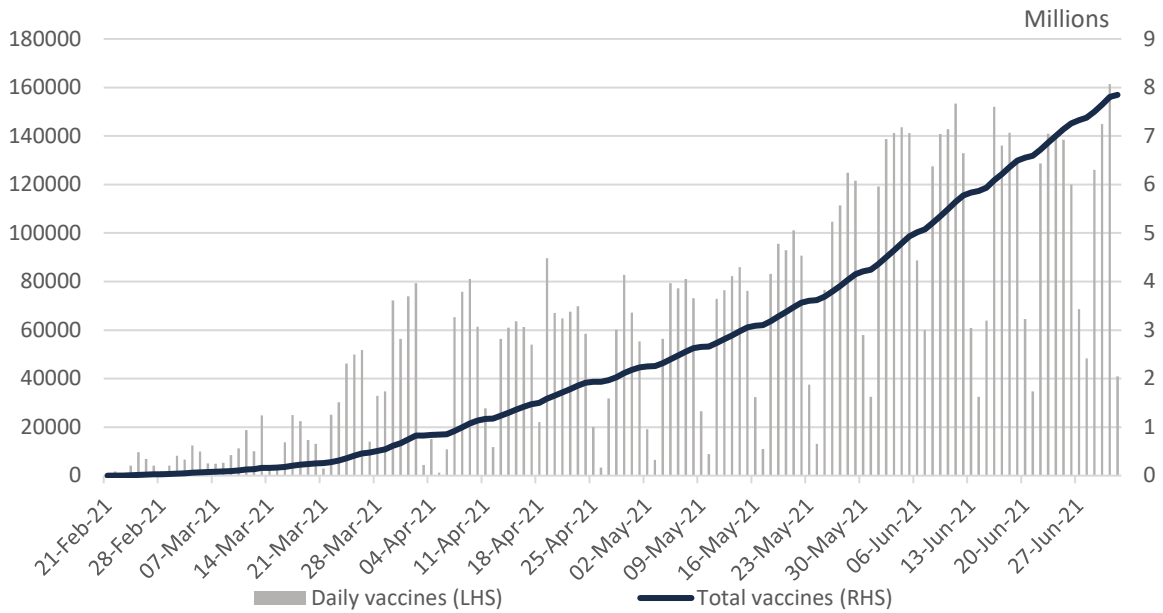
¹⁰¹ Australian Government (2021), [2021-22 Budget Strategy and Outlook. Budget Paper No. 1](#), 11 May, p. 36.

¹⁰² Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [Interview with Leigh Sales, 7:30](#), 12 May.

¹⁰³ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [Virtual Press Conference](#), 28 June; Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [National Cabinet Statement](#), 28 June;

¹⁰⁴ Prime Minister of Australia (2021), [National Cabinet Statement](#), 28 June.

Chart 5: Daily and total vaccine doses administered



Source: [COVID-19 in Australia](https://www.covid19data.com.au), covid19data.com.au, 2 July 2021.

Note: Data collected via press conferences and media releases since late February 2021, and since late April 2021 from the Vaccine Operations Centre Weekly Operational Updates (however these updates do not include running totals). The site states that 'Tracking supply of vaccines has been challenging. These data should be read with caution.'