



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

**TRANSCRIPT
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EO&E...

PRIME MINISTER: Well, good afternoon. I see everybody's met Buddy. Today is an important day in the National Plan. Earlier this week, I wrote to all the premiers and chief ministers and asked them to advise me of where they are up to when it came to home quarantine, which would enable Australia to move to the next phase, more broadly, that would allow Australians to travel overseas and return if they are vaccinated, and to return, to return vaccinated, with no caps on their return. I'm very pleased that the New South Wales Government has advised, as you've learnt today, that they will be in a position to move to a no quarantine arrangement for people arriving back in Australia from the 1st of November, which enables us to be in a position to ensure that we can lift the caps for returning Australian citizens, residents and their families from the 1st of November into New South Wales. What this also means is that we will be allowing Australians, permanent residents and citizens and their families, to leave Australia from wherever they live in Australia and return, but obviously the capped arrangements in other states will continue because of the vaccination levels in those places and the arrangements they have in place in each of those states and territories.

So, this is further demonstration of Australians getting vaccinated is enabling them to do more and more and more. New South Wales is hitting 80 per cent double dose vaccination rates. Here in this city it is turning into one of the more vaccinated cities in the world today, and that is a great achievement for Australia, and in particular those right across Greater Sydney, and it's been hard fought and hard won. And that's why I welcome the fact that this is a further sign of the National Plan coming into effect and allowing Australians to start reclaiming so many of the things that have been taken from them throughout this pandemic.

I also want to note that at the National Security Committee earlier this week, where we considered these matters on Tuesday, we also agreed that we would be looking at expanding the definition of 'immediate family' to include the parents of Australian residents and citizens, and I know that will be very welcome news to Australians right across the country who are hoping to be reunited with their family members, their parents who are overseas. Now, in New South Wales' case, that means that those family members will be able to come into Sydney if they are vaccinated and not have to quarantine, under the arrangements that the Premier has announced today. So, that is a welcome step forward.

I want to stress that for the other states and territories, and I have advised the premiers and chief ministers to this end, that this is about Australian residents and citizens first. The Commonwealth Government has made no decision to allow other visa holders - skilled visa holders, student visa

holders, international visitors travelling under an ETA or other international visa arrangement, visa, visiting visa arrangement - to come into Australia under these arrangements. They are decisions for the Commonwealth Government, as the Premier and I know, and, but where we're in a position to make that decision down the track, then obviously in New South Wales they will be able to do so, if they're vaccinated, without having to quarantine.

So, I think that should provide some sense of assurance to those in other states that all we're talking about now is Australian citizens, residents and their immediate families, which we'll be looking to extend to the parents of those Australian citizens and residents. So, that's good news. We're making good progress. We're looking forward to hitting 70 per cent national double dose vaccinations and, as we've particularly gone over the 80 per cent mark as well for single dose vaccinations right around the country.

A couple of other things quickly before we have the weather set in. The first of those is overnight I confirmed my attendance at the Glasgow Summit, which I'm looking forward to attending. It's an important event. The Government will be finalising its position for me to take to that Summit prior to my departure over the next fortnight. We are working through those issues with our Cabinet and with our colleagues, and I look forward to those discussions concluding over the next couple of weeks. And I simply say to everyone that net zero was an outcome that I outlined at the beginning of this year, consistent with our Paris commitments. The challenge is not about the if and the when, the challenge is about the how. And I'm very focused on the how, because the global changes that are happening in our economy as a result of the response to climate change have a real impact, and they will have a real impact here in Australia. And the plan that I'm taking forward, together with my colleagues, is about ensuring that our regions are strong, that our regions' jobs are not only protected, but they have opportunities for the future. It's not just about hitting net zero. That's an important environmental goal. But, what's important is that Australia's economy goes from strength to strength, and the livelihoods and the lives that Australians know, particularly in rural and regional areas, are able to go forward with hope and with confidence. And that's what my plan will be all about, and I look forward to furthering those discussions in the weeks ahead. Happy to take some questions.

JOURNALIST: Did Dominic Perrottet consult you in his decision to remove not just hotel quarantine but home quarantine as well, he said, for Australians and international travellers?

PRIME MINISTER: Yeah, the Premier and I, and indeed prior to him becoming Premier and in earlier discussions I've had with ministers in the New South Wales Government, this has been a topic of discussion for for some time. And, so, I welcome the announcement today. It is consistent with the advice I have from my own Chief Medical Officer. And, so, we're looking forward to those arrangements coming into place.

As I, as I said, I'd written to all the premiers and chief ministers earlier this week, and also consistent with the decision of the National Security Committee, asking them to confirm the arrangements they would have, so we could make a decision about whether and when Australians would be able to travel overseas again and return. And the Premier wrote back to me today and confirmed that would be on 1st of November, and under those no quarantine arrangements for vaccinated Australians.

JOURNALIST: Does it concern you that they've made this decision on home quarantine so soon after only starting, only recently starting the home quarantine trial? Would you have liked that to run out a bit longer, before they made a call like this?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, we're not opening up to everyone coming back to Australia at the moment. I want to be clear about that. We're going to take this forward in a staged and careful way, as we've done all of these things. It's for the Commonwealth Government, the Federal Government, to decide when the border opens and shuts at an international level, and we will do that. In the first instance, it will be for Australians, Australian residents and their families. We'll see how that goes and then we'll move to the other priorities, which I've already set out as being skilled migration, as well as students to Australia. And then we'll move on to the challenge of dealing with international visitors to Australia. So, everything all in good time. We're not rushing into this. We're taking it carefully, step by step. I welcome the decision in New South Wales. It's showing another strong step forward, and I think it enables us to progress.

JOURNALIST: Will unvaccinated Australians be able to come back?

PRIME MINISTER: There is a 210 cap per week in New South Wales for unvaccinated Australians to come back, which was confirmed to me by the New South Wales Government, and I'm looking forward to confirmation of those other numbers from other state premiers in response to my letter earlier this week.

JOURNALIST: We've got New South Wales opening up to the world. Western Australia is talking about keeping its border closed until next year. How sustainable is that?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, it all depends on the vaccination rates, and that's what the National Plan provides for. And when we reach 70 and 80 per cent vaccination rates under the National Plan, that gives us the opportunity to take the next steps. Now, Western Australia is not at the stage of New South Wales yet, neither is any other state or territory. I'm looking forward to them getting to that level because that means they will then have those options that people in New South Wales will have from the 1st of November.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, could I book a flight to Bali on the 1st of November, and then come back in without quarantining?

PRIME MINISTER: Out of New South Wales, yes.

JOURNALIST: So, New South Wales wants international travellers and international students back from November 1. That won't be able to happen?

PRIME MINISTER: No, the Federal Government is not opening it up to anything other than Australian citizens and residents and their immediate families. That is what will happen from the 1st of November in New South Wales, and indeed all around the country for Australians departing. To return to Australia, obviously they'd have to do that through Sydney or under the capped arrangements in other states and territories.

JOURNALIST: So, when will international travellers and international students be able to come back to Australia?

PRIME MINISTER: Not yet.

JOURNALIST: Was the Premier a little bit hasty, perhaps, in suggesting that tourists and other international travellers could be coming in from that time?

PRIME MINISTER: No, no, what the Premier did today was advise me and announce today that when international students, when international travellers, when skilled migrants are permitted to return to Australia by the Commonwealth Government, then they will not be required to quarantine when they come. The Premier understands that that's a decision for the Commonwealth Government, not for the state governments. And when we believe that's the right decision to make, we'll make it at that time. I'm going to progress steadily, but at the same time, carefully, and I welcome this first step. I think it's a positive step.

JOURNALIST: Would you suggest other states abandon their home quarantine trials - South Australia, Victoria?

PRIME MINISTER: No, I think each state and territory will make their judgements about that. We'll continue to support those trials. I think it's good to have a range of options that are being pursued by the states and territories. Remember, no state or territory is coming from the same place. They're all starting in different positions, with different rates of COVID in their states and territories. And, indeed, I understand today in Tasmania they're going into a very short lockdown. They're still in phase A. And it's a reminder, wherever you are in Australia, please get vaccinated.

JOURNALIST: Is there any reason to think that this could harm the opening of domestic borders, you know, might scare other state and territory leaders into not opening their borders, if New South Wales is welcoming people without quarantine?

PRIME MINISTER: I don't believe so. I don't think there's any justification for that, particularly as we are only extending this to Australian residents, citizens and their immediate families. It's not extending more broadly than that, which would obviously have a much greater volume. It is constrained to that volume of Australian citizen residents returning, which I'm sure all premiers and chief ministers want Australians to be able to come home. Well, I think the weather may be about to beat us ... Last ... Sure.

JOURNALIST: On Glasgow, will you be taking a concrete emissions target or a plan for a target?

PRIME MINISTER: Our position will be set out before I leave for Glasgow. Thanks very much, everyone.