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**COVID REOPENING PLAN DRIVES COMPLACENCY AND RISKS
 THE ECONOMY**

AMA Statement on National Cabinet’s Draft Framework for Reopening

The AMA has written to all members of National Cabinet, advising that its draft Framework for reopening goes too far and is likely to fuel complacency in the community and risk further COVID-19 outbreaks.

The AMA Federal Council has urged National Cabinet to rethink the Framework and aim for an approach that better balances the desire to open up the economy with the need to keep COVID-19 out of the community.

“While the AMA acknowledges the efforts by National Cabinet to encourage a more consistent approach across jurisdictions, our overall assessment is that it represents a significant change in direction, sending a message to the community that will drive complacency,” AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, said today.

“This is despite overwhelming evidence from here and overseas that prioritising the containment of COVID-19 is essential to supporting a sustainable economic recovery.

“Living with the threat of COVID-19 means that sensible restrictions must remain part of our lives for the foreseeable future.

“Step three of the draft Framework goes too far in dismantling many of the restrictions that have kept Australia safe and instead places an unrealistic reliance on quarantine, surveillance, testing and contact tracing.

“Permitting much larger gatherings, allowing venues to have many more people indoors, promoting a wholesale return to workplaces and putting more people on public transport creates an environment where small outbreaks can rapidly escalate, overwhelming our contact tracing capability.

“There is a real danger that this Framework, with its overwhelming emphasis on achieving ‘normal’ in time for Christmas and the summer holidays, will simply fuel complacency in the community.

“This type of approach and timing overseas has been a recipe for outbreaks, even in countries where the virus was thought to be well under control.

“There is an ongoing risk of COVID outbreaks in Australia even once the virus has been eliminated from our communities due to breaches of hotel quarantine or maritime borders.

“Until we have an effective, safe and available vaccine, it is only through ongoing restrictions and other public health measures that we can be assured that any outbreak will be contained, giving the testing and tracing mechanisms a fighting chance to stop any further spread of the virus.

“We are still in the early stages of the pandemic and Australia must lock in the gains made so far, which have been achieved through significant sacrifice.

“Not doing so is a recipe for potential large-scale outbreaks and further lockdowns, which take a heavy toll on our community as well as our economy.”

The AMA Statement on National Cabinet’s Draft Framework for Reopening is at <https://ama.com.au/articles/ama-statement-national-cabinets-draft-framework-reopening>

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