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**AMA ADVISES NATIONAL CABINET NOT TO RUSH LIFTING OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS**

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the National Cabinet should plan for cautious, phased, and gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions when it meets this Friday.

“The National Cabinet must not feel pressured to rush lifting restrictions,” Dr Bartone said.

“Australia’s success in avoiding the worst of COVID-19 is because health concerns have been prioritised by National Cabinet, and decisions have been based on expert medical advice.

“Friday’s meeting should continue to apply medical evidence when putting the health of all Australians first.

“If restrictions are lifted too fast and a second wave occurs, infecting more Australians, the process of re-imposing isolation would be far worse for the health of the population and for the economy than a cautious relaxation of restrictions.

“People should not get their hopes up too high at this stage, because rushing to get things back to normal, without caution and safeguards, risks a huge setback for everyone.

“Fatigue starting to appear in parts of larger cities regarding stay at home messages must not be used as an excuse to relax restrictions.

“The rush to get the NRL competition back in play, for example, is a significant risk for players and those they will interact with. A later, more gradual resumption would be a safer and more sensible option.

“The AMA’s COVID-19 medical advice stays the same until a vaccine arrives - social distancing, personal hygiene, use of the COVID-Safe app, expanded testing, and self-isolation must remain a part of everyday life.

“A second spike or local outbreaks are likely, and business and community groups need risk mitigation plans in place to respond.

“Businesses, workplaces, and community organisations need to adopt protocols to apply social distancing and infection control to their facilities. National Cabinet’s Safe Work Australia guides are a terrific start to what will be a lengthy period of adjustment within work and community facilities.

“Doctors across Australia will do their part in the relaxing of restrictions - by testing, treating, applying social distancing in their workplaces, and using the COVIDSafe app.”

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