



Media release

Rachel Stephen-Smith **MLA**

Minister for Health

Minister for Families and Community Services

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Member for Kurrajong

10
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Public Health Emergency Declaration extended

The ACT Government has extended the Territory's Public Health Emergency Declaration (PHED) for a further 90 days to ensure it can continue to protect Canberrans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACT Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Coleman advised that the extension is necessary due to the ongoing risk of COVID-19 to the Canberra community.

The ACT Government is also maintaining the current low level public health social measures until Friday 25 February 2022. These measures help to limit virus transmission during a period of increased movement in the community, as Canberrans return to school and work.

"Extending the Public Health Emergency Declaration is part of our ongoing pandemic response and enables the Chief Health Officer to continue to take appropriate action, and make public health directions that are necessary to protect the health and safety of Canberrans," said Minister for Health Rachel Stephen-Smith.

"We are cautiously optimistic about the current COVID-19 situation in the ACT. However, we need to maintain effective test, trace, isolate and quarantine measures as well as public health social measures to reduce the risk of widespread transmission of the Omicron variant, and to protect those most vulnerable in our community.

"This extension also means we can be prepared in the event of a new or re-emerging strain of the virus as we head towards winter and cold and flu season.

“The ACT Government continues to work closely with the Chief Health Officer to ensure our public health response reflects the current situation and balances the need to slow the spread of the virus with the needs of business, industry and community.”

The PHED extension also extends the mandatory conditions of employment for some workforces in the ACT to be fully vaccinated. These are:

- Residential aged care workers
- Primary school and early childhood education and care staff
- Hospital, hospice, Canberra Health Services and patient transport workers
- Disability support workers, as well as aged-care workers who provide in-home support.

“Hospitality and licensed businesses (including cafes, bars, nightclubs and indoor entertainment venues) need to continue to ensure patrons are seated while eating and drinking. Dancing at these venues is not permitted,” said Minister Stephen-Smith.

“Canberrans are also being asked to continue to work from home, where this is appropriate for them and their employer, for the remainder of February.

“A further review of public health social measures will be considered over the coming weeks.

“I’d like to thank Canberra businesses, workers and the community for their ongoing support of these measures during this time.”

The extension means the PHED remains in place until 13 May 2022. Further information is available on the ACT COVID-19 website at www.covid19.act.gov.au.

Statement ends

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