



ANTHONY ALBANESE MP
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA
MEDIARELEASE

MEETING OF NATIONAL CABINET

National Cabinet met in Canberra today to discuss national priorities.

COVID-19

The Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer provided an update on the COVID-19 pandemic. First Ministers discussed a nationally consistent approach to transition Australia's COVID-19 response on the basis of the following principles:

- i. minimising the level of severe COVID-19 and death, including through ensuring measures are effective, proportionate and targeted wherever possible for the most vulnerable and at risk populations;
- ii. ensuring the health, economic and social systems as a whole have the capacity and capability to respond to future waves;
- iii. promoting and creating an environment that mitigates pandemic fatigue and generates self-reliance, resilience and capacity building which reduces the reliance on government interventions;
- iv. continue to promote the importance of vaccinations, including boosters, to improve health outcomes;
- v. supporting the economic and social well-being of those living in Australia; and
- vi. returning funding and policy efforts to a more sustainable footing, including for business and individual supports, aged care and health funding.

First Ministers agreed to end mandatory isolation requirements for COVID-19 effective 14 October, with each jurisdiction implementing the change via relevant public health legislation.

National Cabinet agreed to the end the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment effective the same date.

To protect the most vulnerable and those in high-risk settings, the National Cabinet agreed to continue targeted financial support for casual workers, on the same basis as the PLDP, for workers in aged care, disability care, aboriginal healthcare and hospital care sectors.

The new payment will be funded 50:50 between the Commonwealth and States and Territories, with final details including eligibility and compliance to be released by Services Australia.

These arrangements will be reviewed at the December meeting of National Cabinet.

Improving care pathways

National Cabinet considered advice from First Secretaries on improving care pathways for patients, and addressing pressures on the health and hospital system.

First Ministers agreed to further work, with policy options to be considered in the context of each jurisdictions budget processes.

Health care professionals' skills and qualification recognition

First Ministers agreed to progress a suite of projects proposed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (AHPRA). Projects will streamline and accelerate skills and qualification recognition while maintaining an appropriate level of safety and quality.

First Ministers also agreed to an independently-led, rapid review of regulatory settings for both Australian and overseas trained health professionals, which will report back to National Cabinet in early 2023. This continues work to implement priorities from the Jobs Summit.

Housing

First Ministers discussed housing supply and accessibility concerns and the need to work together. National Cabinet agreed to re-establish the Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council, which will provide a forum to progress critical housing reforms.

National Cabinet also noted that Treasurers, through the Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR), are pursuing short and long term housing policy reforms to improve housing affordability, which will complement the work of Housing Ministers.

High-risk weather season preparedness

First Ministers were briefed by the National Emergency Management Agency and the Bureau of Meteorology on the upcoming high-risk weather season.

First Ministers discussed the potential implications of a third consecutive La Niña event and noted preparations being made by relevant agencies.

The National Cabinet remains committed to working together on national priorities and will meet again in December.

FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2022