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**The Hon. Karen Andrews MP**  
Minister for Home Affairs

**The Hon. Stuart Robert MP**  
Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business

## **JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT**

Friday 1 October 2021

### **NEXT STEPS TO REOPEN TO THE WORLD**

Australia is ready to take its next steps to safely reopen to the world, with changes coming to the international border.

Our government is setting out the framework for how international travel will look in coming months.

With first dose vaccination rates at over 78 per cent and double dose rates nationwide at 55 per cent and on track to reach 70 per cent in some jurisdictions over the next week, our government has been finalising plans so Australian families can be reunited, Australian workers can travel in and out of our country, and we can work towards welcoming tourists back to our shores.

Within weeks, large parts of the country will be moving to Phase B and then to Phase C of the National Plan to safely reopen Australia and to stay safely open. Under Phase C, international travel is on track to reopen safely to fully vaccinated Australian travellers. Many countries around the

world have now safely reopened to international travel and it will shortly be time for Australia to take the next step.

To enable fully vaccinated Australians to travel, our government is finalising new arrangements.

Following completion of home quarantine pilots in New South Wales and South Australia, it is anticipated that states and territories that are ready to do so will roll out:

- Seven day home quarantine for Australian citizens and permanent residents fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved for use in Australia or 'recognised' by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)
- 14-day managed quarantine for anyone not vaccinated or vaccinated with a vaccine not approved or recognised by the TGA.

Australian citizens and permanent residents who cannot be vaccinated - for example if they are under 12 or have a medical condition - will be treated as vaccinated for the purposes of their travel.

States and territories will begin this program at different times given their varying vaccination rates but we expect the system to commence in November.

Under Phase B and C of the National Plan, 14-day managed quarantine caps apply to unvaccinated arrivals. These will return to previous levels at Phase B of the National Plan. We will work with states and territories to remove all travel caps on vaccinated Australians.

In line with the National Plan, our government is balancing the need to minimise the risk that the spread of COVID-19 presents, with the need to live with the virus.

The Government's intention is that once changes are made in November, the current overseas travel restrictions related to COVID-19 will be removed and Australians will be able to travel subject to any other travel advice and limits, as long as they are fully vaccinated and those countries' border settings allow. Border settings and quarantine requirements in other countries continue to change and we strongly encourage all Australians to closely monitor DFAT travel advice, available on [smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au).

These changes mean there will be no travel restrictions if you are a vaccinated Australian entering or leaving our shores.

We will also work towards completely quarantine-free travel for certain countries, such as New Zealand, when it is safe to do so.

Testing is expected to continue to be a requirement of international travel, but subject to further medical advice, Rapid Antigen Tests may be used.

Australians who want to travel overseas once restrictions are removed will be able to access an internationally recognised proof of vaccination document in the coming weeks to prove their vaccination status abroad. The proof of vaccination for international travel will include a QR code that is readable globally, and will comply with the standards set out by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. Engagement with commercial airlines and foreign governments has already begun to ensure they are familiar with the system.

We know it has been an extraordinarily difficult 18 months for Australians overseas trying to come home and for Australians with family and friends overseas.

To maximise the number of Australians who can return, our government is also offering facilitated flights into any state or territory that agrees to commence seven day home quarantine trials for returning Australians.

More than 680,000 Australians have returned since the Government recommended people reconsider the need to travel abroad in March last year. The Government stands ready to assist more people to return with the cooperation of states and territories.

Australian citizens and permanent residents who have been vaccinated with a TGA-approved vaccine overseas can already visit their GP or local pharmacist in Australia to have their COVID-19 vaccination status updated in the Australian Immunisation Register, to be able to show proof of vaccination in Australia.

In coming weeks the government will finalise the processes for people to be able to show their vaccination status if they have had a TGA 'recognised vaccine'. People who have received vaccines not recognised by the TGA, or who are unvaccinated, will be required to undertake 14 days of managed quarantine on arrival.

In addition to the four COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved and registered for use by the TGA - Pfizer (Comirnaty), AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria), Moderna (Spikevax) and COVID-19 Vaccine Janssen - the TGA has also been reviewing other vaccines in widespread use around the world for the purposes of determining 'recognised vaccines'.

We need to ensure that we keep Australians safe without creating unnecessary obstacles to people who have been fully vaccinated overseas from coming to our country.

Today, the TGA has published its initial assessment of the data on the protection offered by the Coronavac (Sinovac) and Covishield (AstraZeneca/Serum Institute of India) vaccines and has advised that these vaccines should be considered as 'recognised vaccines' for the purpose of determining incoming international travellers as being appropriately vaccinated.

Declaring certain COVID-19 vaccines as 'recognised vaccines' is separate to a regulatory decision on whether they are approved for use for vaccination in Australia, which has not been made by the TGA.

The recognition of these two additional vaccines is a major milestone towards more Australians vaccinated overseas getting home sooner.

The TGA will continue its assessment of other vaccines for the purpose of determining 'recognised vaccines' based on the available data and data that is provided.

In coming weeks the Minister for Health will consider updates to the Biosecurity Act Emergency determinations to facilitate some of these changes for fully vaccinated Australian travellers as we move forward on the National Plan to get Australia back to normal and reopen our country safely.

**[ENDS]**

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