



SURVITUDE: Sydney residents continue to wear masks even after NSW dropped mask mandate

Description

AUSTRALIA: The fearmongering tactics of public health officials and the mainstream media appeared to have a [prolonged effect on many Australians](#) as they continue to wear masks despite the mask mandate being dropped by the government. While the Wuhan coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions have eased in New South Wales since December 15, thousands of Sydney residents still use face coverings as the government urges them to “take personal responsibility” of their health.

Even as the restrictions eased, Chief Health Officer Dr. Kerry Chant advised people to wear their masks indoors amid fears that case numbers would balloon to an estimated 25,000 a day by January. NSW residents heeded Chant’s advice and continued to wear masks when entering indoor venues.

NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet also urged citizens to take responsibility for their well-being by [accessing vaccines and booster shots](#). “What’s key to us is personal responsibility. Vaccination has been key, booster shots are crucial to keep people safe, and as we move through the next phase, case numbers will increase,” he said. “That is the new normal.”

Meanwhile, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he will urge states to refrain from reimposing tough restrictions. After calling high-level talks to discuss the omicron response, he said he would tell state leaders that Australia needs to learn how to live with the virus.

“The states have the total authority when it comes to public health orders,” he said. “The Commonwealth does not have the power to direct those state and territory governments. What I will be saying to them – and I know a number of premiers agree with this – is we have got to move to the next phase of how we live with this virus. The time for that heavy hand is behind us. We just need to live with this virus sensibly and practically.”

He also urged Australians to [think of “the person sitting on the other side](#) of the table” and wear masks in indoor settings. “Think of the person you’re going to meet this weekend. Think of Christmas Day where you’ll see elderly relatives, and wear a mask. It’s pretty simple. And so I would encourage you to do exactly that, as the medical advice has highlighted.”

Chief Medical Officer Professor Paul Kelly also wrote to the premiers, urging them to implement “minimal to moderate restrictions” to avoid case surges and protect their hospitals from being overwhelmed.

Masks remain compulsory in some settings

Masks remain compulsory for shopping in other states like Victoria and Queensland, but it is optional in NSW as Perrottet said he wants to treat his citizens “like adults.”

Despite Kelly’s support for mandates, Morrison insisted he does not back mandates and instead only wants state governments to issue updated advice when it comes to wearing masks. “We are putting in place measures that Australians can live with. What that means is we have to move from a culture of mandates to a culture of responsibility. That’s how we live with this virus into the future,” he said.

The NSW government lifted the rules last week amid high vaccination rates, with 93.4 percent of residents under 16 already fully inoculated, while 94.9 percent already received at least one dose.

Under the eased restrictions, face coverings are now only mandatory in hospitals, airports and public transport. As holiday celebrations kick off around the country, NSW recorded their highest-ever daily COVID cases of 3,057 on Tuesday, Dec. 21, . (Related: [Australians furious over mask mandates for the holiday season.](#))

Despite increasing case numbers, Perrottet vowed to maintain the state’s freedoms, emphasizing that the focus should be on hospital admission figures instead. “We are taking a balanced and proportionate response that is completely focused on keeping people safe while at the same time opening up our economy and ensuring that people are able to work and provide for their families,” he said.

By Mary Villareal

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