



Will Australians ever be free?

Description

AUSTRALIA: The fanatical pursuit of Zero Covid is a recipe for never-ending lockdown.

Sydney's two-week lockdown began on 26 June, after the state of New South Wales recorded 18 new locally transmitted cases. There was just one person in intensive care with [Covid](#) in the state on the day the lockdown began. At the time of writing, there is [still only one](#).

Perth's four-day lockdown began on 28 June. It was brought in after [two cases of community transmission](#) were detected – bringing the city's 'cluster' up to three cases. No one in Western Australia is in hospital with Covid.

Darwin's snap two-day lockdown, announced on 27 June, has already been extended to five days. There are [10 active cases](#) in the entire Northern Territory. Ten people are in hospital, though none in ICU.

Much of Queensland is in lockdown, too. A three-day lockdown began on 29 June after [four new cases](#) were discovered in the state. There are 41 hospital beds taken up by Covid patients in Queensland, but no patient is in ICU.

Even those Australians who are legally entitled to leave their homes cannot escape the Covid mania. In South Australia, [new restrictions](#) were brought in on 29 June that limited venue capacity to one person per two square metres. The restrictions also meant South Australians were banned from standing while drinking at pubs and clubs – to stop the spread of Covid, of course. There are just 18 active cases in South Australia, by the way. And nobody is in hospital with Covid.

Australia was the envy of the world in 2020, managing to keep Covid cases and deaths very low. We are now the world's laughing stock. And it is all because of our reckless [Zero Covid mentality](#). All Australian leaders, even if they won't say it, are clearly committed to the idea that Covid can be eliminated. And all policies are on the table to achieve that. When elimination is the target, no risk is

too small to necessitate draconian restrictions.

There was hope that New South Wales would be different. It had the only state government that appeared to recognise the harms of lockdown. It looked as if it wanted to find a way to live with Covid. But those hopes have now been dashed.

No matter where you live in Australia, your leaders can lock you down at any time. There is no escape. And nor will there be for a long time to come. Prime minister [Scott Morrison](#), after returning from the G7 summit in Cornwall, had this to say: 'Even as the UK is finding with an 80 per cent vaccinated population, they're not there either because they've got over 100 people dying every week... That's not a situation that I'm prepared to countenance.' What a terrifying statement for Australians to hear: that even when 80 per cent of adults have been vaccinated, lockdowns will still be a regular feature of our lives.

Then there is the failure of Australia's vaccination rollout. Australia has fully vaccinated less than six per cent of the population – the lowest of any country in the OECD. Catching up with the UK could take years at this rate.

We will have to get used to lockdowns. And to constant border closures – another policy deployed by our leaders at the first sign of risk, regardless of the humanitarian cost. Here are two stories of what border closures can do.

[Moe and Sarah Haider](#) were in hotel quarantine when Sarah was forced to have an emergency C-section. Following the successful procedure, they were banned from visiting their newborn because they had not completed their hotel quarantine. They could not hold their child for the first week of his life, nor visit him even when wearing full PPE. Both of them were fully vaccinated.

Then, there was the family from Victoria who wanted to [holiday in Queensland](#). They opted to take an airport shuttle bus from the carpark to the airport terminal in Melbourne. This counted as entering a 'Covid hotspot' and meant they were forced to quarantine in a hotel.

Australians know these things could happen to any of them at any moment. The public needs to start speaking out more loudly. We cannot just trust our leaders to do the right thing.

And what is all of this pain for, anyway? Evidence from around the world shows lockdowns aren't working. [Research](#) from the National Bureau of Economic Research in the US compared the Covid policies of 50 US states and 43 countries and found no evidence that lockdowns led to lower death rates. 'To the contrary', the authors claim, 'we find a positive association between [lockdowns] and excess deaths'.

And yet Australia's state governments keep throwing us into more and more lockdowns. Australia's success in 2020 went to our leaders' heads, and now no suffering is too great to wake them up from their Zero Covid fantasies. If they ever do wake up, what is going to be left of Australia?

by James Bolt

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