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AMA calls for NSW to stay the course for all Australians

The AMA has today written to NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, supporting the extension of current restrictions in NSW, while calling for them to remain in place as long as needed to bring the outbreak under control.

“This new delta strain is incredibly transmissible. It’s also potentially very deadly - this NSW outbreak has already put 37 people in hospital. Seven are in the ICU, with two of them on ventilators. Eight of those hospitalised are in their 30s, including one in the ICU,” AMA President, Dr Khorshid said, citing latest reported figures from 7 July 2021.

“This is not a mild disease that only impacts the sick or elderly. It is deadly and it can impact any one of us,” he said.

The AMA recognises that lockdowns affect the community in profound ways, but continues to call on all Australians, especially those in Greater Sydney, to strictly adhere to the public health advice, so as to eliminate the threat as quickly as possible.

“COVID is not an enemy that gives up, and neither should we.

“Now is the time to redouble our efforts and our resolve as a community, to beat the current outbreak in NSW.

“We do not have high levels of the population vaccinated yet. We are nowhere close to ‘herd’ immunity. If the outbreak in NSW is not dealt with, then we will see borders around Australia closed.

“Lockdowns, when complied with, work. Victoria has beaten back COVID through lockdowns, and come out the other side stronger and safer. Sydney can, and must, do the same,” Dr Khorshid said.

The AMA supports last week’s National Cabinet four stage plan to opening up Australia, and moving to a position of living with COVID, but only once the population is vaccinated.

“While I have no doubt once we are all vaccinated we will be in a position to ‘live with COVID’, now is not the time to ‘open up’ or relax.”

“Doing so without being vaccinated would not mean ‘suppression’. It would mean suffering the same devastation we have witnessed unfold overseas.

“It would mean that the vast bulk of the population, who are unvaccinated, would be at real risk of serious disease, and potentially worse. It is not something we should accept, and it’s not something our hospitals could cope with.

“If we want to look after all Australians, return to the freedoms we enjoy, to reopen schools, businesses and borders, then we need to beat back this outbreak the only proven and possible way we have available to us - adhering to lockdowns until the outbreak is under control.

“It has been a long and painful journey. But the end is in sight. We have two good vaccines, with significant increases in supply in the coming months, to vaccinate our entire eligible population.

“All governments and all Australians need to hold firm. Australia has led the world in showing how a population can largely eliminate the threat of COVID and keep our community safe, and we must do it again,”.

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