

Let's work for unity and harmony on COVID this Christmas

Tuesday 21 December 2021

The National Cabinet meeting tomorrow must show united leadership now and resolve on concerted action to counter the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, the Consumers Health Forum said today.

“The soaring infection figures in several states make it clear this is not the time for relaxation of common-sense safeguards such as face masks in crowded places and QR testing,” the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells said.

“In light of the ever-changing environment and rise in consumer confusion about the best personal steps to safeguard health, Australians need the National Cabinet to agree on a clear and united plan of action that embraces all parts of the country.

“If we want to make the most of peace and harmony this festive season, we need firm and immediate decisions on several fronts:

- Firm directions on the administration and supply of the booster vaccine with consideration of reducing the pause between shots to three months between second and third jobs
- Upgrades to supply and availability of vaccines including for the many thousands of children yet to be vaccinated
- National uniformity on infection control measures, including mask wearing mandates and QR codes

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- The introduction of rapid antigen testing available free for all legitimate uses. These tests while not as accurate as PCR tests will help reduce the need for unnecessary quarantine measures
- Reinforcement of public information and call to action around the importance of full vaccination to include the booster dose

“It will be an unforgivable tragedy if after most parts of Australia adapted so well to personal practices such as masks and QR codes, for all of that to erode this Christmas time in the face of a much more infectious virus than those we have previously dealt with well as a nation.

“We need to move on from the patchwork of measures being adopted by each state and territory and our leaders need to lead in agreeing on a nationally-consistent strategy.

“The currently divided approach is not only ignoring science for some alleged benefit for the economy and business. It is sowing doubts in people whether they happen to be for or against cohesive action. For many Australian consumers it means caution will rule their actions whether or not there are mandates,” Ms Wells said.

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