

CORONAVIRUS — INTERSTATE BORDER RESTRICTIONS — TRANSITION PLAN

760. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Premier:

On behalf of the member for Dawesville, I welcome the student house captains from the Frederick Irwin Anglican School Halls Head campus. Welcome to Parliament House.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's continued commitment to keep Western Australia safe.

- (1) Can the Premier outline to the house how WA's safe transition plan will ensure that WA's existing way of life can continue safely?
- (2) Can the Premier update the house on the state government's response to the evolving outbreak in the Northern Territory?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for the question. Nearly two weeks ago, the Minister for Health and I announced Western Australia's safe transition plan to provide a soft landing for Western Australia out of the pandemic as we ease our controlled border when we hit 90 per cent double-dose vaccination. Our controlled border has been a flexible tool to keep WA safe depending on the conditions around us. We now have a serious outbreak in parts of the Northern Territory; therefore, under the controlled border regime, the Northern Territory has been declared a low-risk jurisdiction. That means from 4.00 pm today, arrivals must now complete 14 days of self-quarantine and get tested within 48 hours of arrival and again on day 12. Arrivals from low-risk jurisdictions, including the Northern Territory, are also now required to be double-dose vaccinated. Anyone who has arrived on or after 10 November 2021 and has been at an exposure site, up to and including today, will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days and be tested immediately within 48 hours and again on day 12. Anyone from the Northern Territory, especially Darwin, Robinson River and Katherine, who did not visit the exposure site venues and has arrived from 10 November up until 4.00 pm today, should go and get tested if they develop any symptoms.

The controlled border gives us the flexibility to impose stricter conditions if the situation deteriorates, or softer ones if it improves. Obviously, we are very concerned now about what is going on in the Northern Territory, so this measure is necessary to protect Western Australia as we get our vaccination levels up. Our controlled border cannot last forever. Early next year, in late January or early February, we will ease the controlled border. We will make a decision on the exact day when we hit 80 per cent double-dose vaccinations in December. We expect that will be in late January–early February. Once the date is locked in, it will be there and will remain in place. Our safe transition plan will ensure that we have good health outcomes and also keep economic momentum into 2022.

I remind members that there are some states in which restrictions are in place. New South Wales still requires mask wearing indoors, the two-square-metre rule in venues and no music festivals. South Australia, based upon the new rules it is putting in place, will have a whole bunch of restrictions, particularly on businesses over the Christmas–New Year holiday period, which will be devastating for many of those businesses. On the other hand, we are very keen to avoid any of that while we get to the 90 per cent vaccination rate.

There is one other point I want to make: we are all in this together. We need to work cooperatively. Now is not a time to undermine or to nitpick. It is not a time to pander to the anti-vaxxers and the conspiracy theorists who are out there. What we have seen in both Western Australia and Victoria has been deranged and crazy. Some of the behaviours are deranged. They are lunatic. They are crazy behaviours, both here and in Victoria, with intimidation and threats, and people rolling gallows around the streets of Melbourne. This is not the Australian way. No-one should support that. Everyone should condemn that sort of conduct. I encourage everyone to condemn that conduct. We need to join together at this time of trouble and strife and condemn that sort of behaviour. My advice to everyone is: please go and get vaccinated.