

Poll suggests Australians think Premiers handling pandemic better than PM

By James Glenday on AM 19 July 2020

Sydney and Melbourne in Lockdown, the head of the nations COVID-19 Vaccination taskforce says the problem plagued program should soon start to speed up. Lieutenant General John Frewen says more than a million doses of the Pfizer Jab arrived overnight and similar sized deliveries are now expected each week. The announcement comes as new research suggests that Australians believe that the states are doing a better job at handling the pandemic than the Federal government, led by the Prime Minister Scott Morrison. From Canberra, here's our political reporter James Glenday.

JG: Over the weekend Australia's problem plagued vaccination program marked a milestone, 10 Million doses have now been administered. It's taken so long to get to this point because there hasn't been enough supply particularly of the Pfizer jab. But finally that could be on the verge of changing.

LGJF: yea look this is really exciting, this is nearly three times the Pfizer that we had a fortnight ago

JG: lieutenant General John Frewen says a million doses arrived over night and a million more should keep arriving every week until at least the end of August he believes it'll be months if not weeks until Under 40s get access to Pfizer, the preferred vaccine for younger Australians, but says supply will soon start to get closer to demand

LGJF: With these additional amounts of Pfizer and the additional GP's and Pharmacists and other sorts of distribution hubs that we are bringing on I think that gives us the chance to punch through that million doses a week mark and as I said really accelerate the programme of the next couple of months.

JG: Many commentators and a number of politicians have been describing the vaccine rollout so far as botched or a shambles and new polling suggests that an increasing number of Australians approve more of the premiers handling of the pandemic than the Morrison governments. When asked 43% said the states were managing the crisis better, just 16% picked the federal government and 24% thought both were doing an equally good job

BB: It certainly seems Premiers have been well received, I think that owes a lot to the strict decisive approach they've tended to take.

JG: Bill Brown who is running the ongoing survey for the progressive thinktank the Australia institute, believes COVID-19 could lead to a reshaping to how the Federation could work, with Premiers wielding more power long term and shaping policy discussion on the National stage.

BB: I expect that to continue beyond the pandemic as they use their authority to pursue other measures as well. I mean the reality is that the states and territories provide the lions share of services, but it doesn't always get the attention that it deserves.

JG: But two former prominent state leaders are a bit sceptical. Former NSW state Labor premier says views on the federation have always ebbed and flowed.

BC: With NSW flattened as if by a B-52 bombing of our economy, I think the trail of responsibility will clearly go back to the state administration that somehow saw no need to tell a driver of an airport limonene, that he had to wear a mask

JG: Both he and former Victorian Liberal premier Jeff Kennett say the Morrison government is suffering politically because it didn't get enough vaccinees quickly enough.

JK: I think people are just so disappointed and 25% of the community James, including young children whose schooling has been disrupted now for 18 months are in a terrible, terrible shape