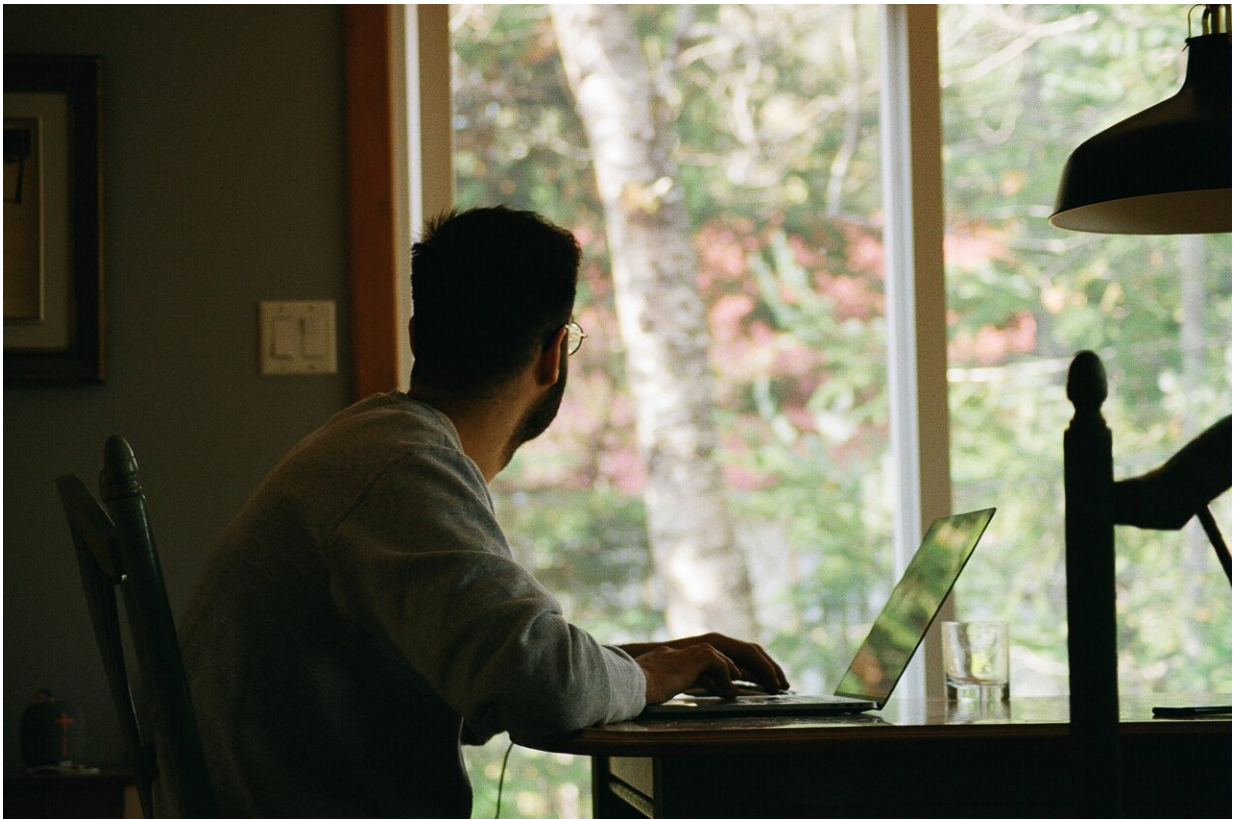


Researchers zero in on longer lockdowns to crush COVID-19

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The NSW Government faces a high-pressure decision this week about whether to relax current restrictions because of the latest COVID-19 outbreak, according to an expert from The Australian National

University (ANU).

Research just published by a team of modellers, economists and [public health experts](#) from the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, and the University of Melbourne sheds light on lockdowns.

Lead author Professor Quentin Grafton said their research highlights the hazards of relaxing before zero community transmission is likely.

They found the net benefits of lockdowns that are sufficiently long enough to get community transmission to zero far outweigh any short-term gains of relaxing lockdowns too soon.

"Our key insight was that lockdowns need to be long enough to crush the virus, and that effective, longer lockdowns benefit both [public health](#) and the economy," Professor Grafton said.

"Greater Sydney is approaching the end of the initial two-week [lockdown](#). The NSW Government is under pressure to relax those restrictions, but decisions must be based on the facts on the ground such as the number of new cases, links to known chains of transmission, and the number of new cases not already in self-isolation."

University of Melbourne Professor Tom Kompas said we need to rethink how COVID-19 outbreaks are managed.

"We're a long way from a post-COVID world. If we think we can do away with periods of movement restrictions when uncontrolled outbreaks occur, we need to think again," Professor Kompas said.

"The key point here is not to think about the [economic costs](#) over a period of a couple of weeks, large as they are, but rather to consider the

costs over a period of months if community transmission continues."

The paper also looked at the public [health](#) and economic questions facing Australia and evaluated the costs and benefits of restrictions that result in zero community transmission of COVID-19.

"Our results support strategies that go hard against COVID-19 infections and get us to zero community transmission. This is especially the case now with this Delta variant and Australia's currently low vaccination level," Professor Grafton said.

"To ensure compliance and to help those who are doing it tough, we need sufficient levels of financial support for the people who are most affected by lockdowns," he said.

The study of Epidemiological modelling of the health and economic effects of COVID-19 control in Australia's [second wave](#), was published in the *Journal of Public Health*.

More information: R. Quentin Grafton et al, Epidemiological modelling of the health and economic effects of COVID-19 control in Australia's second wave, *Journal of Public Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1007/s10389-021-01611-0](#)

Provided by Australian National University

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