

## TIGER C19

Timely Integration of User  
Generated Responses about C19

### Introduction and Approach

**WHAT:** TIGER C19 is an ongoing collaboration between the Burnet Institute and the University of Melbourne that combines big data analytics of social media postings with qualitative research methods.

**HOW:** Using a sophisticated data analytics tool, TIGER C19 extracts posts containing selected key terms or topics from two social media platforms: “Reddit” and “Twitter”. The resulting data are then subjected to thematic analyses, as presented below.

**WHY:** TIGER C19 informs public health and health information responses by examining local Covid-related issues of current interest as both a supplement and complement to other research and intelligence. The current focus is on Victoria, though the emerging themes have broader resonance and application to other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas.

### Summary of results

Table 1 below summarises findings for the key words, focusing on the top 20 URLs and the most popular upvoted (Reddit) or retweeted (Twitter) posts using the key terms or topics as listed in Table 1.

Data collection period: 6 October – 15 October 2021

Total number of hits/posts: 68,599

**Table 1: Summary of Reddit and Twitter ‘captures’ by key words**

Term/Topic	Posts	Term/Topic	Posts
Choice	6,127	Control	5,966
Fear	5,293	Fines	888
Passport	3,927	Protest	5,416
Travel	5,590	Vaccine	8,356
Demonstration	2,394	Government	7,247
Roadmap	2,439	Fatigue	595
Lockdown	7,895	Rules	6,466

## Emerging themes

We analysed the most popular posts (and repost trails) to determine emerging key themes.

### 1. Concern over health and non-health consequences of lockdown

- Negative mental, physical, psychological ramifications of lockdown and ongoing uncertainty.
- Concern for emotional and mental health of all sectors of the populace (e.g., business owners, students, children).
- Fear that social disobedience will spread leading to lawlessness.
- Serious threats to livelihoods and economic future, especially small businesses.

### 2. Protests and demonstrations impact on social cohesion

- Accounts and live reporting of policing of “Pro-choice”/”Freedom”/”Anti-vax” protests and arrests.
- Concern that someone will be killed in a protest or demonstration.
- Increased police presence on streets and in neighborhoods engendering fear.
- Debate around community/industry base v political activists at core of protests.
- Anger over lockdown of construction sites.

### 3. Concern over policing of alternative views and demonstrations

- Policing of protest marches and policing of Western suburbs contrasted with unfettered picnics/gathering in wealthier suburbs.
- Many accounts of police violence, especially from “Freedom” posts.
- Melbourne Freedom Rally organizer arrested for volatile media postings.
- Accounts of police violence and home visits to suspected protestors.
- Fear turning to anger and unrest.

### 4. Fatigue resulting in rule breaking

- Political/public health response and messaging out of touch with how people are behaving.
- Short, sharp lockdown has failed as cases increase.
- People giving up complying with lockdown regulations.
- Lack of compliance to lockdown rules as a form of protest.
- People already disobeying restrictions and enacting “freedoms” promised for the future.

### 5. Antithesis towards politicians and public health messaging

- Want to hear from others (community representatives, psychologists) rather than politicians, academics, health experts.
- Politicians using (vaccination) targets to drive public fear and compliance.
- Melbourne as world’s longest locked-down city despite low Covid numbers and deaths.
- Stream of alternative views e.g., Covid as a hoax enabling State to control the population.
- Some (e.g., politicians, sports and media stars) able to bypass rules with impunity (e.g., PM trip to Sydney on Father’s Day).
- Focus on health and modelling in devising roadmap to exclusion of other factors, such as the economy.

## 6. Discontent concerning rule implementation

- Disparity between enforcement of rules.
- Rules around returning students will be prejudicial to some countries.
- Confusion as to which agents (e.g., police or venue manager) will monitor/marshal post-lockdown regulations.
- Severity of lockdown measures disproportionate to Victorian outbreak.
- Sense of permanent crisis due to lockdown approach.
- Need for consistency in regulations across States and for interstate travel.

## 7. Mixed feelings on the issue of choice and potential consequences

- Unvaccinated will be “locked-down” in some ways after opening up.
- Unvaccinated people may not be allowed into venues, but those vaccinated cannot always avoid public transport.
- Unvaccinated cohorts will place huge stress on the health system.
- Tourists will not choose to come to Australia due to strict quarantine rules.
- Many organisations now making vaccination mandatory (e.g., access to university campuses).
- Fear that getting tested will result in being isolated/stigmatized in local community.
- Individuals should have the choice to remain vulnerable to disease.
- QR coding impinges on civil liberties.

## 8. Concerns expressed around vaccines and vaccination program

- Fear of adverse outcomes from vaccinations (including impact of “additives”).
- Unwind fear by providing facts regarding impact of side effects of vaccines.
- Multiple issues around people’s choice around vaccination (civil liberties, health concerns, mistrust of vaccine development).
- Isolationism becoming the norm, resulting in fear of removing restrictions.
- Difficult policy choices to be made, such as border controls/closures restricting free movement.
- Need to provide guidance and support for businesses to manage post-lockdown regulations.

## 9. Support for lockdown and associated measures

- Support for lockdown, especially in support of health workers and the public health response.
- Importance of sustained lockdown to stem Delta and Long Covid.
- Support for health workers being over-worked and stressed.
- Vaccine passport essential to open up CBD.
- Support for silent protests against vaccine mandates, such as by teachers, nurses and other health workers.
- Importance of fines as checks to ensure compliance.
- Value of fines for those posting misinformation (especially around vaccinations).
- Fines will deter lockdown demonstrators.
- Tips and suggestions as how best to experience lockdown.