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# Counting Down to 100 Days

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- April 30<sup>th</sup> marks 100 days of the Biden presidency
- Over 100 million US citizens have already been vaccinated with 2.5 million more being vaccinated each day
- Optimism around the economic recovery is growing
- Fight against climate change a top priority for the Biden administration



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The last 12 months have been ones of extreme change and adaption. Covid-19 changed the landscape on a number of fronts. Working from home became business as usual, social distancing became the norm and restrictions on travel both domestically and internationally took hold.

As well as dealing with the domestic and global implications of Covid-19, there were also a number of other significant changes that took place. One of those was the inauguration of a new U.S. President. After beating Donald Trump, Joe Biden became the 46th President of the United States of America. His inauguration on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 already seems like an age ago and April 30<sup>th</sup> will mark 100 days of his presidency.

Over that period, the progress of vaccine rollouts around the world have dominated headlines. The UK has begun mass vaccinations, while Europe has been struggling with supply issues. Some new vaccines have been approved while others have been temporarily paused. Case numbers are still increasing and side effects from the vaccines are becoming more apparent including more recently the risk of blood clotting. Domestically, the limited number of cases on our shores has afforded the Australian government time to take a more measured approach to rolling out the vaccine.

In the US, Biden announced a plan to have 100 million people vaccinated within his first 100 days. That target was actually met on the 19th March but with the lack of tweets, which was the primary communication medium adopted by his predecessor, you might think that Biden hasn't really done a lot since coming into power.

In fact, he has quietly been going about implementing a number of changes (in particular to policies implemented by Trump). While it took Trump two weeks to sign his first eight executive orders, Biden signed 15 executive orders within the first 24 hours of his presidency.

There are three areas that Biden has targeted as being top priorities.

1. Stemming the human impact of Covid-19
  2. Reviving the economy
  3. Addressing the issue of climate change
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## Covid-19

Biden is well on track in his vaccination program. Over 100 million people have been vaccinated with shots continuing to be administered at a rate of 2.5 million vaccinations a day. This success is in part due to the boost in the federal response to the coronavirus crisis that was the first executive order he signed. While the priority remains vaccinating US citizens, the US is now in position to help supply both Canada and Mexico with vaccines.

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## Economy

A large part of the economic recovery rests on mass vaccinations which are well under way. But in the meantime, the economic stimulus proposal Biden released on January 14<sup>th</sup> is focused on helping to see the economy through the interim. In fact, investors were buoyed by the new US \$2.3tn infrastructure spending plan and growing optimism about the economy. The latest highs in the US markets point to renewed confidence among investors that the economic recovery is gaining pace.

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## Climate

A key aspect of the platform that Biden ran on was climate change and this was reflected in the initial list of executive orders that he signed. These established climate considerations as an essential element of US foreign policy and national security and he set a target for the US to achieve a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035. He also set a target for the US to reach a net-zero economy by 2050. At the same time, he re-joined the Paris Climate Agreement and rescinded the Keystone XL Pipeline permit as well as ordering federal agencies to reinstate environmental regulations his predecessor had rolled back.

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## Passing Grade

As we roll up to 100 days of the Biden presidency, it would be easy to think that there has been little action from the new president but Biden and his administration have hit the ground running. As well as the above, he has also announced the withdrawal of all US troops from Afghanistan by September 11<sup>th</sup>. Whilst a focus of his administration is to restore international relationships, he is also showing he will not be a soft touch. He has imposed a number of sanctions on Russia in response to what the US says are cyber-attacks and other hostile acts. And China remains on the radar with the US having blacklisted seven Chinese groups it accuses of building supercomputers to help its military.

While some of his achievements thus far have garnered some headlines, Covid-19 is still the main issue that the world is contending with. Biden though has been quietly going about his work and in doing so has positioned the US to lead the way in the human and economic recovery from Covid-19.

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