

Axe falls on \$21m 'failed' COVID app

The Albanese Government has axed the "wasteful and ineffective" COVIDSafe app — saying it cost \$21 million and identified only two positive virus cases.

Health Minister Mark Butler said on Wednesday that the app, launched in April 2020, identified just 17 close contacts over the past two years that had not already been found through manual contact tracing.

"This failed app was a colossal

waste of more than \$21 million of taxpayers' money," he said.

"The former prime minister said this app would be our 'sunscreen' against COVID-19 — all it did was burn through taxpayers' money."

Users of the app had been prompted to accept an update this week with the message that it was being decommissioned.

"The COVIDSafe app is no longer being used to assist

health officials with contact tracing," the message said.

"Data is no longer collected and will be deleted from the National COVIDSafe Data Store.

"Data on your device will be deleted when you uninstall the app."

When former prime minister Scott Morrison rolled out the app in 2020, he spruiked the move as "a way out of lockdowns" for Australia.

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