



Hon Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Leader of the House

16 DEC 2021

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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliament
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr ^{Neil}Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petitions numbered 3608-21, 3609-21 and 3634-21 tabled in Parliament on 16 November 2021, in relation to COVID-19 vaccine mandates when crossing Queensland borders and the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, particularly in relation to transmission of COVID-19 to and from vaccinated people. As these petitions are similar in nature, I have taken the liberty of responding to all petitions in this letter. I therefore ask that this response be noted against each petition.

In relation to the requirements for entry at the border to Queensland, I can advise the following.

There are currently no requirements for people to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to enter Queensland from Australian jurisdictions that are not declared hotspots.

Where a jurisdiction is declared a hotspot, meaning that the risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission is significantly increased due to community transmission and active outbreaks, entry to Queensland has always been restricted for the protection of Queenslanders.

For residents of the New South Wales border zone, requirements for entry can vary. Provisions for border zone residents acknowledge the unique social and health impact of limiting cross-border movements and balancing this impact against the risk to the community posed by COVID-19 transmission from frequent cross-border movement while COVID-19 transmission continues in New South Wales. Entry to Queensland for essential purposes is not restricted on the basis of vaccination status, though some additional restrictions are imposed in a targeted and time-limited way during periods of increased COVID-19 risk.

On 13 December 2021, Queensland's border opened for quarantine-free entry by fully vaccinated domestic travellers, including for recreational travel, regardless of whether they are travelling from a declared hotspot or not. Unvaccinated people may also enter Queensland, provided they undertake quarantine at a government nominated facility. For fully vaccinated Australian residents travelling from overseas, home quarantine will be permitted subject to conditions. Australian residents arriving in Queensland from overseas who are not vaccinated may enter but will remain subject to quarantine at a government-nominated facility.

Our border measures have been carefully developed to safely reunite Queensland families with their loved ones while minimising the risk of COVID-19 to our community and reducing the need for public health restrictions going forward.

In relation to the concern expressed that vaccination of a person does not stop transmission of COVID-19 to another person, I can advise the following.

It is globally recognised by medical experts and organisations such as the World Health Organization that vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 offers the best protection against COVID-19 disease. While vaccinated people can still become infected and develop COVID-19, they are significantly less likely to experience moderate to severe illness or die from COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Australia have all been shown to be highly effective against severe disease from COVID-19. Vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation due to Delta infection has been shown to be 95.2 per cent and 98.4 per cent for AstraZeneca and Pfizer, respectively, two to nine weeks following the second dose. The effectiveness of these two vaccines against death from COVID-19 has been shown to be 94.1 per cent and 98.2 per cent, respectively.

While instances of breakthrough infections – that is, episodes of SARS-CoV-2 infection in fully vaccinated people – unfortunately can and do occur, the rate of such infections is significantly lower than for similarly exposed unvaccinated people. Further, the risk that a fully vaccinated person will develop severe illness or death from COVID-19 is significantly reduced, as is the risk that they will pass the virus onto others. The fact that breakthrough infections can occur even among vaccinated people is testament to the serious threat posed by COVID-19 and the importance of ensuring as many people as possible are vaccinated, to slow the transmission and impact of the virus.

Vaccination is our way out of this pandemic and into living with COVID-19.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



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