



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

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 3631-21, tabled in Parliament on 26 October 2021, in relation to the issue of mandatory vaccination of all employees who face members of the public in their day-to-day work.

COVID-19 vaccines offer proven and safe protection against COVID-19. Vaccination reduces the risk of infection and onwards transmission, lowering the number of people who may otherwise suffer from the disease. By lowering the risk of moderate to severe illness, vaccination breaks the link between COVID-19 cases and deaths.

Vaccine mandates are widely supported and becoming more common to protect workers and workplaces as well as business continuity during the ongoing pandemic.

The Queensland Government has a range of employee vaccination mandates in place, in line with advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and consideration by National Cabinet. These cover particularly vulnerable cohorts such as aged care, disability services and health care settings.

Due to the nature of their work, if infected with the virus, workers in these settings pose a greater risk of transmitting COVID-19 to vulnerable populations. The implications of an outbreak in their work settings would be severe to residents and the overall operations of these facilities. Mandatory vaccination for these cohorts mitigates these risks.

Queensland Health staff working in locations where care is provided were required to be fully vaccinated by the end of October 2021. Over 93 per cent of in-scope staff have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 91 per cent been fully vaccinated. All 51 Queensland Health Aged Care facilities, including multi-purpose facilities, have reported 100 per cent of workers with at least one dose, and so far, 22 sites are reporting 100 per cent fully vaccinated.

On 10 November 2021, vaccination requirements have been extended to cover all private healthcare staff across the state, including staff working in hospitals, aged care and disability services.

On 9 November 2021, the Queensland Government released *Queensland's Public Health Measures linked to vaccination status – a plan for 80% and beyond* (The PHSM Plan). The PHSM Plan's measures will come into effect on 17 December 2021, when Queensland is expected to have reached 80 per cent two-dose vaccine coverage.

The measures will limit the attendance of unvaccinated people – staff, patrons and visitors – to a range of venues and settings involving face-to-face interaction. Only vaccinated people, children under the age of 16 and people that are unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons will be able to attend:

- vulnerable settings, including residential care facilities, hospitals, prisons, disability services (as a visitor);
- hospitality venues such as hotels, pubs, clubs, taverns, bars, restaurants or cafes;
- indoor entertainment venues such as nightclubs, live music venues, karaoke bars, concerts, theatres or cinemas;
- outdoor entertainment activities such as sporting stadiums or theme parks;
- festivals – either indoor or outdoor – such as musical festivals, folk festivals or arts festivals; and
- Queensland Government owned galleries, museums or libraries.

Both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people will be able to access essential services and activities. This means unvaccinated people will still be able to receive healthcare, go to grocery stores, pharmacies, post offices, newsagents and clothing stores, and participate in activities like going to the gym for exercise. They may also visit vulnerable settings for the purposes of end of life visits, childbirth, or in emergency situations.

Queensland is continuing to monitor the ongoing COVID-19 situation, particularly as we transition into 'living with COVID-19' as vaccination coverage increases. The Palaszczuk Government is actively considering the need for additional vaccination requirements in other settings, such as schools and childcare. Queensland also continues to encourage businesses to consider their specific workplace environments, including whether mandatory vaccination is appropriate to their workforce.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Yvette D'ATH". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'Y'.

YVETTE D'ATH MP
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