



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

1 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000
GPO Box 48 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3035 6100

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

28 APR 2022

28 APR 2022

Neil

Dear Mr ~~Laurie~~

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 3677-21, tabled in Parliament on 29 March 2022, in relation to rapid antigen testing as an alternative to mandatory vaccination requirements.

Queensland has had a successful pandemic response, with the community enjoying higher levels of freedoms than most jurisdictions in Australia and overseas while maintaining one of the lowest morbidity and mortality rates in the world. The Queensland Government continues to adopt a flexible response to COVID-19 and tailor the public health measures to protect the community from both the direct impacts of COVID-19 and from the impacts of future surges of COVID-19 on the capacity of the health system.

As a result of the level of vaccination in Queensland, restrictions will be eased from 1am 14 April 2022. This means that venues such as pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants, theme parks, casinos and cinemas, weddings, showgrounds, galleries, libraries, museums and stadiums, will be open to both vaccinated and unvaccinated staff and patrons.

As Queensland's public health response has shifted from the elimination of COVID-19 to managing ongoing transmission in the community, it is important to protect the most vulnerable and protect the capacity of the health system. For this reason, some public health measures, including vaccination mandates, will continue to apply in certain vulnerable and high-risk settings including hospitals, aged care facilities and disability accommodation. This will ensure a baseline level of protection is maintained in these settings to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and infection among staff, customers and visitors, reduce the scale and severity of outbreaks, and protect the capacity of the health system.

High vaccination coverage remains a key determinant of positive health outcomes for all Queenslanders, while also minimising the impact of COVID-19 cases on our hospital system and the impact of COVID-19 on ongoing operations of businesses and public facilities – and community life in general. The more of us who are vaccinated, the fewer adverse events there will be.

Rapid antigen testing will remain a key strategy for COVID-19 surveillance testing and quickly detecting COVID-19 cases. As Queensland has done throughout the pandemic, public health measures will be continually reviewed in the context of whether the benefits they provide sufficiently outweigh the social and economic costs they may create.

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 fluid and cursive, with the first letter of "Yvette" being a large, stylized capital letter.

YVETTE D'ATH MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
Leader of the House