



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

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28 March 2022

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 3684-22, tabled in Parliament on 24 February 2022, in relation to the removal of the mandatory use of the Queensland Government's Check-in Qld app (Check In Qld).

The introduction of Check In Qld in February 2021 assisted Queensland businesses to comply with the public health direction requirements in place at the time by enabling patrons and staff to check-in at venues. Contact information was collected and stored by the Queensland Government to further strengthen Queensland Health's contact tracing capability and allowed businesses to reopen, service providers to resume, and for Queenslanders to safely engage and participate in their community.

With the introduction of the Queensland's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan To Unite Families (the Vaccine Plan) and the *Public Health and Social Measures linked to vaccination status Direction* (the PHSM Direction), Check In Qld also provided a simple and streamlined way for businesses to ensure compliance with any vaccination requirements. As restrictions continue to ease in line with the Vaccine Plan, and as we move into Phase D of the National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response, we continue to review and adjust Queensland's response to the evolving situation.

The emergence of the Omicron variant of concern (Omicron) late last year has meant we are now seeing widespread community transmission of COVID-19 not just across Queensland, including parts that had previously not seen cases of COVID-19, but across the nation and globally. Because of our careful planning and management, COVID-19 transmission in Queensland is occurring against a backdrop of a highly vaccinated population and is resulting in less morbidity and mortality and a lower pressure on health services than has been experienced in other jurisdictions.

Although Omicron is immune evasive and extremely transmissible, the evidence is that vaccination continues to provide strong protection against severe disease and that vaccination, including booster doses as recommended, helps to protect against infection and transmission. Alongside this, the community's compliance with the public health measures such as mask wearing have been key to our successful response throughout this wave.

In light of the emergence of Omicron and the proliferation of community transmission in most Australian jurisdictions, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) recommended a revised national approach to testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine (TTIQ) which focused on high-risk locations or settings.

In order to better reflect AHPPC's recommended approach on TTIQ, Queensland updated the PHSM Direction requiring only high-risk businesses and vulnerable settings to collect contact information. This approach is best aligned to other jurisdictions and meant the current requirement to collect contact information is retained for:

- any business, activity or undertaking defined as high-risk and subject to vaccination requirements e.g. hospitality venues, indoor entertainment venues, outdoor entertainment venues, festivals, weddings, funerals;
- vulnerable settings including hospitals, residential aged care facilities, prisons, youth detention centres and disability accommodation services, as these settings are subject to vaccination requirements; and
- visitors to schools, early childhood education and care (ECEC) where it will be useful to have information to respond to and manage outbreaks, particularly with the potential for large numbers of unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children in the early phases of the vaccination rollout in this cohort.

In these settings, check-in will continue to be required using Check In Qld which, as noted above, allows visitors to easily demonstrate compliance (at a point in time or retrospectively) with mandatory vaccination requirements as they are considered settings with the greatest risk of transmission and adverse outcomes. The collection of contact information, or check-in, is no longer required for settings such as supermarkets, retail settings, or hairdressers.

Check In Qld remains the most streamlined and convenient way for settings to confirm compliance with any vaccination requirements for entry while vaccination and booster doses continue to play a key role in managing the worst impacts of the pandemic. Check In Qld remains an essential tool to support any ongoing future contact tracing as we move toward an environment where we are managing a level of ongoing COVID-19 transmission in the community while at the same time being ready for any future waves and variants of concern.

These measures are regularly reviewed based on health advice.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



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