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A Message from Neil Scales

Director-General – Transport and Main Roads

Wednesday, 6 April 2022

Hello

As you may have heard and as reported in the popular press, the Premier announced yesterday that [public health and social measure restrictions](#) in Queensland will be further relaxed in time for the Easter break.

The [Chief Health Officer Directive](#) which currently requires staff and visitors to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to attend a range of public venues in Queensland will be eased from next Thursday. This means people will no longer need to prove they have had two doses of a vaccine before heading into cafes, pubs and clubs from 1am on April 14. This also includes theme parks, casinos, cinemas, weddings, showgrounds, stadiums, galleries, libraries and museums. Importantly, vaccination requirements will remain for people working in high-risk settings including a majority of the Queensland public service workforce as identified by the Chief Health Officer, including hospitals and health care settings, aged and disability care, schools and early childhood centres, airports and correctional facilities.

Naturally, this will inevitably raise questions about the [TMR COVID-19 vaccination requirements – Whole of Department Policy](#).

Staying safe in the workplace

Noting that there are a number of mandatory vaccination policies across the public sector, Directors-General and Commissioners yesterday discussed vaccination mandates in the workplace. Following this discussion, and with the support of Queensland Health, I can advise that the **TMR Vaccination Policy remains in place**.

To be clear as to why, the easing of public health restrictions is an acknowledgement of the high vaccination rate in our community, with more than 90 per cent of Queenslanders aged 12 and older now having received two or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Whereas the TMR Vaccination Policy (and those of other departments) is about a Director-General's responsibility towards employees. It remains incumbent on all employers to provide a safe workplace for their employees, and consider the role of COVID-19 vaccines in that safe work environment.

Yesterday's announcement does not change the risk of transmission from public to staff and staff to staff. If anything, it creates a slightly higher risk. And vaccination is key. As the Chief Health Officer, Dr John Gerrard said at yesterday's press conference: "I cannot over-stress this: vaccination will remain the key going forward as our restrictions are gradually lifted. It will be the vaccination that will be protecting us all from this disease. The virus is not going to go away. You will be exposed to this virus sometime during the course of this year. And it is the vaccine that will protect you."

As I have said many times previously, I have a duty of care for the TMR workforce and I take that responsibility very seriously. Protecting our workforce and the Queensland communities we serve remains a priority. Having COVID-19 safe workplaces, with guidelines—and vaccination mandates where necessary—developed in consultation with employees and employee representatives, gives workforces an appropriate layer of protection while helping to lessen the need for restrictive population-wide mandates.

Accordingly, I remind all employees to [update your vaccination status in ESS](#) by Monday 11 April, which is the second dose date in the policy. Please be aware that should you remain non-compliant with the policy, without an approved exemption, exception or delay, then TMR instructs you not to attend the workplace from your usual starting time on, or after, Tuesday 12 April 2022. You will receive advice about your ongoing employment status, including confirmation that you have been referred to an internal discipline process, shortly after that date.

For more details on this process please visit the [intranet](#).

Feeling unwell? Get tested

If you're feeling unwell, or displaying symptoms you should stay home and get tested. If you learn you have COVID-19 using a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) at home, [report your positive RAT result](#) to Queensland Health. You must also let your manager know about your result, [report it to WHS Connect](#), and then immediately isolate for seven full days from the date you had your test.

It's also important to know what to do if you are a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case; the steps you need to follow are on the [Queensland Government website](#), along with information on requirements for [critically essential workers](#).

Wear a face mask on public transport

While some of the face mask restrictions that were previously in place have been lifted, it's important to remember that face masks are [still required in certain settings](#), such as public transport or platforms/terminals, or when in, or waiting for, a taxi, rideshare vehicle or commercial shuttle.

That's it from me for now. I will be back in touch with a TMR news update next week and I'll continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and keep you updated on any significant developments.

In the meantime, please stay safe and take care of yourself, your family, and your mates.

Neil

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