



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

9 JUN 2022

Dear Mr ^{Neil}Laurie

I write in response to petition number 3642-21, tabled in Parliament on 10 May 2022, in relation to no mandatory vaccinations and passports.

Queensland has had a very successful pandemic response, with community members enjoying higher levels of freedoms throughout the pandemic than most jurisdictions in Australia. In the first two years of the pandemic, Queensland's flexible response and tailored public health measures, including border restrictions, protected Queenslanders and the Queensland economy from the significant public health, social and economic risks associated with COVID-19. These measures bought time to ensure that every eligible Queenslander had the opportunity to be vaccinated before the virus circulated widely in our community.

From late 2021, with high vaccination coverage, the public health response has transitioned from elimination to suppression with a strong focus on monitoring and protecting vulnerable populations and health system capacity. Since late 2021, COVID-19 restrictions have been gradually easing in line with *Queensland's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan to Unite Families – A Plan for Queensland's Borders*.

It is important to understand that there is a distinction between requiring people be vaccinated, and making vaccination a condition of entry for certain environments and certain types of work. COVID-19 vaccination has never been mandatory for the Queensland community as a whole. However, Queensland has taken a risk-based approach to restrictions that has factored in a person's vaccination status as part of transitioning its response to COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccination is a requirement to work in particular work environments in Queensland, including healthcare, aged care and disability care, early childhood, primary and secondary education.

When border restrictions were in place, entry and quarantine arrangements differed depending on vaccination status. Queensland's borders have since reopened and people can enter Queensland regardless of their vaccination status, as long as they follow Australian Government eligibility requirements to enter Australia if arriving from overseas.

Restrictions on entry for unvaccinated people into certain discretionary venues, such as hospitality venues, were also a feature of this response. These requirements were removed on 14 April 2022. Entry restrictions for unvaccinated visitors remain in place at vulnerable facilities, where there is the greatest risk of adverse outcomes. This includes hospitals, residential aged care facilities and disability accommodation services, which provide services to our most vulnerable populations. Entry to essential services was never restricted.

High vaccination coverage remains a key determinant of positive health outcomes for all Queenslanders and to protect Queenslanders against severe disease.

I note the petitioners have raised the operation of Queensland's *Human Rights Act 2019*. A wide range of information specifically about discrimination, human rights and COVID-19 is available on the [Queensland Human Rights Commission](https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/) website (<https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/>).

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvette D'Ath', written in a cursive style.

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