

3 December 2021

The Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
GPO Box 48
BRISBANE QLD 4001

The Honourable Di Farmer MP
Minister for Employment and Small
Business and Minister for Training and
Skills Development
PO Box 15483
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Ministers

I refer to the *Public Health and Social Measures linked to Vaccination Status* that were issued by the Queensland Government on 9 November 2021 and are to apply from 17 December 2021. It is Council's understanding these measures will be given effect through a Public Health Direction, which is presently being finalised.

As you would no doubt be aware, councils across the State have been receiving considerable feedback and questions from members of their communities and local businesses in particular, seeking clarification or further information on considerations associated with the development and implementation of these measures. While I am sure many of these matters are also being raised directly with the Queensland Government, I would like to raise with you specifically, certain concerns that are being highlighted by local businesses and members of the community on the Sunshine Coast.

Specifically, the feedback which our Council is receiving on a consistent basis includes:

- Local businesses are seeking much greater clarity on the rules relating to access to certain locations by persons who are unvaccinated, how access and refusal of access is to be managed and greater certainty for the future in regards to the legal and financial implications of complying with the mandated requirements and their ability to trade into the future should these measures be in place for an extended period of time.
- A particular concern that has been raised from proprietors of tourism accommodation – of which there are many on the Sunshine Coast – is the uncertainty associated with the obligations (and how they are to be managed) in relation to the monitoring and control of peoples' movements in multi-use premises. In particular, the concern has been raised regarding the circumstances of tourist accommodation with an associated restaurant and/or café and how the proprietor/site manager is to manage and control movements of both vaccinated and unvaccinated people between these different locations (with differing access and social measures in place) within the same building.

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- There are strongly held concerns being expressed by many business owners in relation to their ability “to take reasonable steps to enforce these restrictions”. Most businesses are aware that should an unvaccinated customer refuse to comply with a request from a business owner or their employee to not enter their premises, that the Queensland Police Service can be called to manage the non-compliance and any associated behaviour. However, there are considerable fears being expressed about how the “reasonable steps” are to be managed (particularly in specific settings where only one or two employees may be in the premises). Such circumstances and the reactions that may be encountered can be confronting and threatening for business owners and their employees and there is a genuine concern that the “reasonable steps” requirement being placed on businesses is both high risk and potentially unmanageable.
- The application of the mandatory access requirements to employees as well as patrons is generating concerns about the availability of staff – particularly in the high demand Christmas Holiday period when the availability of labour is tight and competition in the employment market is always strong. This potentially not only impacts on the ability of a business to service its customer base but also on their ongoing competitiveness in a highly constrained operating environment to attract and retain vaccinated staff.
- Many local businesses are seeking a much better understanding of the rationale for the application of the mandated measures to non-essential businesses. In particular, the questions being regularly posed are:
 - how and what considerations were taken into account in determining what are essential and non-essential businesses?
 - why is the risk of transmission considered to be greater in a non-essential business (like a bar or restaurant) than in an essential business such as a supermarket?
 - What are the expected or forecast implications of having no access mandates in place between the 80% fully vaccinated target and the 90% fully vaccinated target (when the proposed Public Health and Social Measures will be reviewed)?

Ministers – what I have outlined above is a snapshot of the issues that are consistently being raised by local business operators on the Sunshine Coast and by members of our community.

Our Council is taking this opportunity to raise these issues with you on behalf of our community and in the spirit of supporting the continuing collaboration which we have demonstrated with Queensland Government agencies in the context of managing the on the ground response to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To this end – and in the interests of supporting a higher level of community awareness and understanding of the intent and implementation considerations for the Public Health and Social Measures - on behalf of our Council I am seeking – as a matter of urgency given these new measures come into effect in two weeks – greater clarity and information on each of the matters outlined above, which our Council is willing to share with our community.

Secondly, could I also ask that the concerns that are reflected above be fully considered and addressed in a fulsome manner in the development of the proposed Public Health Direction to give effect to these measures and reflected in the Queensland Government’s continuing communication channels.

Thank you for considering these matters and I am more than happy to discuss any of the above with you directly at any time.

Yours sincerely



MAYOR MARK JAMIESON

Copy to: Dr Peter Aitken, Acting Chief Health Officer
Ms Katarina Carroll, Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service