

COVID-19 Update: 10 July 2021

Categories : [COVID19](#)

Date : 10 July, 2021



Dear Members

Unfortunately, in Sydney it seems that COVID-19 is here to stay, at least for now.

Today, there were 50 new cases of covid announced with 37 in the community while infectious. Yesterday there were 44 new cases announced with 29 active cases moving about in the community. As a result, the Premier strengthened restrictions in an attempt to slow down the spread of the new delta variant.

Despite the immediate problem, this new outbreak and its associated restrictions is affecting everyone in NSW. Those members who, as part of their duties, enter the Greater Sydney Area for work are subject to the same restrictions as those who live in Sydney. As little as an hour or two may make someone subject to the stay-at-home orders.

Earlier in the week, we heard reports that a positive COVID case had been identified at the Sydney Trains Mortdale Maintenance Centre. Luckily, this employee was not in the workplace during the contagious period and NSW Health was able to manage the case. We also know of other cases of "close contacts" being required to test and isolate across the network.

This has highlighted Transport's siloed approach across business units. Communication seemed reasonable in some areas but was distinctly lacking in others. This allows misinformation and rumours to spread and puts us all further on edge in an already uneasy time. Openness and transparency will be key in managing this pandemic. Frontline workers deserve to hear the facts first ... before they are put through the PR machine. If you have any concerns in a situation like this, your delegate or HSR is the place to go for reliable information.

Our Tram and Bus Division has advised Transport this week that drivers will not be operating school specials from institutions that have an active case of COVID-19 unless students from that school are wearing masks. We expect that Transport and the school will police the wearing of masks on our buses.

We are also still seeing some immature behaviour by managers taking place in such a volatile time, one which is causing great angst among many members.

- Some members who live, or who have travelling interstate and are subject to government-imposed restrictions have been treated like they are somehow in the wrong.
- In a dumbfounding act of insensitivity, the Customer Service Directorate of Sydney Trains released a video making a joke of an issue that CSA delegates feel very strongly about. This act lacked compassion and basic empathy.
- Sydney Trains have decided now is an appropriate time to split the roster of Area Controllers and move half back to the ROC from Disaster Recovery Centres

On Friday morning, RTBU representatives raised with senior Transport for NSW officers several issues needing attention:

- The potential for the alteration of rostering arrangements for regional employees to be relieved before entering Sydney in the event of the lockdown continuing for an extended period.
- The concerns of members, particular those in our Tram and Bus Division, around the introduction of the QR code system into the workplace alongside the standard sign on protocols. These members are under constant surveillance for their entire shifts anyway and will now be watched even further.
- The continued lack of priority status for all frontline transport workers in terms of vaccinations.

Although there is a differing opinion on getting vaccines, one thing we should all agree on is that if someone in our position wants a vaccine, they should be able to get one. The Morrison Government's rollout of the vaccine has been nothing short of appalling.

Remember, your health is your most important gift. Whether you are working from home, or on the frontline, you need to make sure you're looking after yourself. If you have any concerns about your conditions at work, make sure you contact your local delegate, organiser, or head office and your union will be there to assist.

Stay safe everyone!