

## COVID Update – 11 September 2021

Categories : [COVID19](#)

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The COVID numbers continued to rise this week as the virus continues to spread across NSW. Yesterday we saw a cynical move by the NSW Government telling us that they will no longer be providing daily updates and will instead delegate that task to NSW Health to do online. This is the next stage in what seems to be a deliberate drive to divert attention from case numbers and instead focus on vaccination rates.

The Government also announced their reopening plan. The “roadmap” will apparently allow some freedoms for people who are fully vaccinated, including things like visiting pubs and sport venues.

The lockdown will end and stay-at-home orders for adults who have received both doses of a

Covid-19 vaccine will be lifted from the Monday after NSW achieves the 70% double-dose vaccination target.

Current predictions indicate NSW will reach 70% double-dose vaccination (of over-16s) by about 19 October 2021. If this is correct, it is a Tuesday, so under the plan announced, the freedoms would come into effect six days later being the following Monday, 25 October 2021. This is of course just a prediction and subject to change.

Members in many regional areas across the state woke this morning to lifted lockdown restrictions. We hope that you enjoy your newfound freedom and that we can all join you sooner rather than later.

However, the risk of COVID everywhere remains. This week there was three COVID cases identified in workers for Pacific National at Sydney Freight Terminal, Clyde and Enfield. No doubt there will be others asked to isolate as a result of those cases.

There was also a positive case from Western Sydney who travelled on the XPT from Strathfield to Coffs Harbour forcing six crew members and many more passengers to enter isolation.

Simultaneously with the cancellation of Gladys' daily updates, the NSW Government has changed the criteria in which businesses are able to access support in the form of "JobSaver". The criteria in which business are able to access this support has been revised to require fresh testing every fortnight on their revenue. Support schemes like this have been vital to keep people on their feet throughout the pandemic, and it's disappointing to see this scheme scaled back while we are still well and truly in the midst of this pandemic.

Late last weekend, the Health Minister, Brad Hazzard, again revised the public health orders (**PHO**) applying to members. This is the latest last minute change to draconian PHOs that are causing Transport Workers across the state, but particularly in LGAs of concern, unnecessary stress. The change made was:

- The date to be vaccinated in order to leave an LGA of concern for work was moved back to 9 September 2021.
- If a worker from an LGA of concern had booked an appointment to get vaccinated by 9 September 2021 for a date before 19 September 2021, they could still leave for work purposes.
- After 19 September 2021, authorised workers in an LGA of concern will not be able to leave for work unless they have had at least 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or evidence of a medical exemption

Our focus this week has been on ensuring that testing is in place across NSW. Our view remains that vaccination by itself is not sufficient to ensure a safe workplace. Rapid Antigen testing is required to ensure that workplaces are COVID free, and each and every member is safe when they are performing their duties. It was reported this week that NSW Parliament has RAT in place. If they can do it for themselves, surely they can do it for those keeping our state moving.

Of course, other precautions must remain in place such as physical distancing and mask wearing to further reduce the risk of workplace transmission.

As always, stay safe.