

11 August 2021

SER21/05636

Troy Wright
Assistant Secretary
Public Service Association
By email: psa@psa.asn.au

Dear Mr Wright

I refer to your correspondence dated 6 August 2021 regarding concerns of the COVID Safe working arrangements for Compliance Operations Inspectors.

The safety of our people is our priority and we are committed to working together with employees and unions to identify ways to continue to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 for our employees, contractors and customers.

A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) was first developed in 2020 to safely manage the risks arising from COVID-19, as far as is reasonably practicable. In July 2021, Compliance Operations work health and safety (WHS) representatives from across the state, together with a Health and Safety branch representative undertook a review of the current COVID-19 risks and controls in place. The review took into consideration new information and risk control advice in relation to the Delta strain of the COVID-19 virus. I have attached a copy of the revised SWMS for your information.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) is responsible for providing safety critical services to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Where our work is safety critical and must continue, we continue to work to identify and implement controls to ensure these activities are carried out in a safe way.

With this in mind, I provide the following position in relation to the issues you have raised:

1. Where possible TfNSW does not require Compliance Operations Inspectors to travel outside an LGA of concern to retrieve a work vehicle to then return to an LGA of concern. Where appropriate, TfNSW will explore home garaging on a case by case needs basis.
2. TfNSW recognises the criticality of vaccinating our people, particularly our customer facing staff. We provide support to our staff through flexible work and leave arrangements including an additional two hours of paid time to encourage the increased uptake of vaccinations. We continue to work within NSW Government to explore additional pathways to prioritise and escalate the uptake in vaccinations for our staff.
3. TfNSW is monitoring the impact on alert levels from both a work health and safety and public safety perspective and will adjust alert levels requiring trucks to enter an inspection station where it is reasonably practicable and safe to do so.
4. The PSA's proposal to only allow annual HVIS inspection appointments to be conducted within the affected LGAs has been considered but is not practical given the volume of operators who reside in these areas and the limited number of facilities. TfNSW continue to explore options in relation to our capacity to undertake HVIS inspection appointments across our sites.
5. TfNSW is considering those additional controls suggested in point 5 of your correspondence in consultation with staff with the review expected to be completed by 20 August 2021.

6. The headsets trialled at Carrington continue to be assessed with a review to be completed by 20 August 2021.

TfNSW will continue to work with the PSA and members to continue our constructive dialogue on these and other issues to make staff feel safe and supported at work.

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact Mr David Morgan, Director, Health and Safety at david.morgan2@transport.nsw.gov.au or 0411 024 485.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'M'.

Tara McCarthy
Deputy Secretary
Safety, Environment and Regulation