

NSW DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT



COVIDSafe Measures Policy review

Consultation – 15 July to 5 August 2022

NSW Department of Transport
consultation pack

July 2022



Acknowledgement
of Country

Transport pays respect to Elders past and present, and recognises and celebrates the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.



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Executive summary

The Department of Transport is commencing consultation on a proposal to move to strongly recommending up to date vaccination but no longer mandating vaccination for any roles across the department.

This pack will:

- provide details and information on this proposal;
- outline the safety controls that minimise the risk of COVID-19 in our workplaces;
- outline how you can provide feedback on this proposal.



The current vaccination policy



The Department of Planning and Environment Vaccination Policy was introduced in December 2021.

It requires all workers of the Department of Environment and Planning, as well as visitors, to have received at least 2 doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

This Policy continues to apply to former Department of Planning and Environment employees who are now employed at the Department of Transport.

This Policy has been vital in keeping workplaces and people safe. At the time that it was introduced, vaccination was a key control in reducing transmission of COVID-19.

Since the implementation of the Department of Planning and Environment Vaccination Policy the COVID-19 landscape in NSW has changed.



The current vaccination policy

Changes to the COVID-19 landscape in NSW

Recently, we have seen changes to the COVID-19 landscape:

- There are no longer requirements to demonstrate your vaccination status to participate in a broad range of social activities. This means that vaccinated and unvaccinated people currently mix freely in public environments including on public transport, in shops, cafes, theatres, pubs etc;
- hotel quarantine is no longer a requirement for international arrivals;
- diagnostic testing such as nasal and saliva RATs (rapid antigen tests) have become widely available, easy to use and familiar; and
- as a State, we have higher vaccination rates across the community as well as a booster program that is continuing to expand.

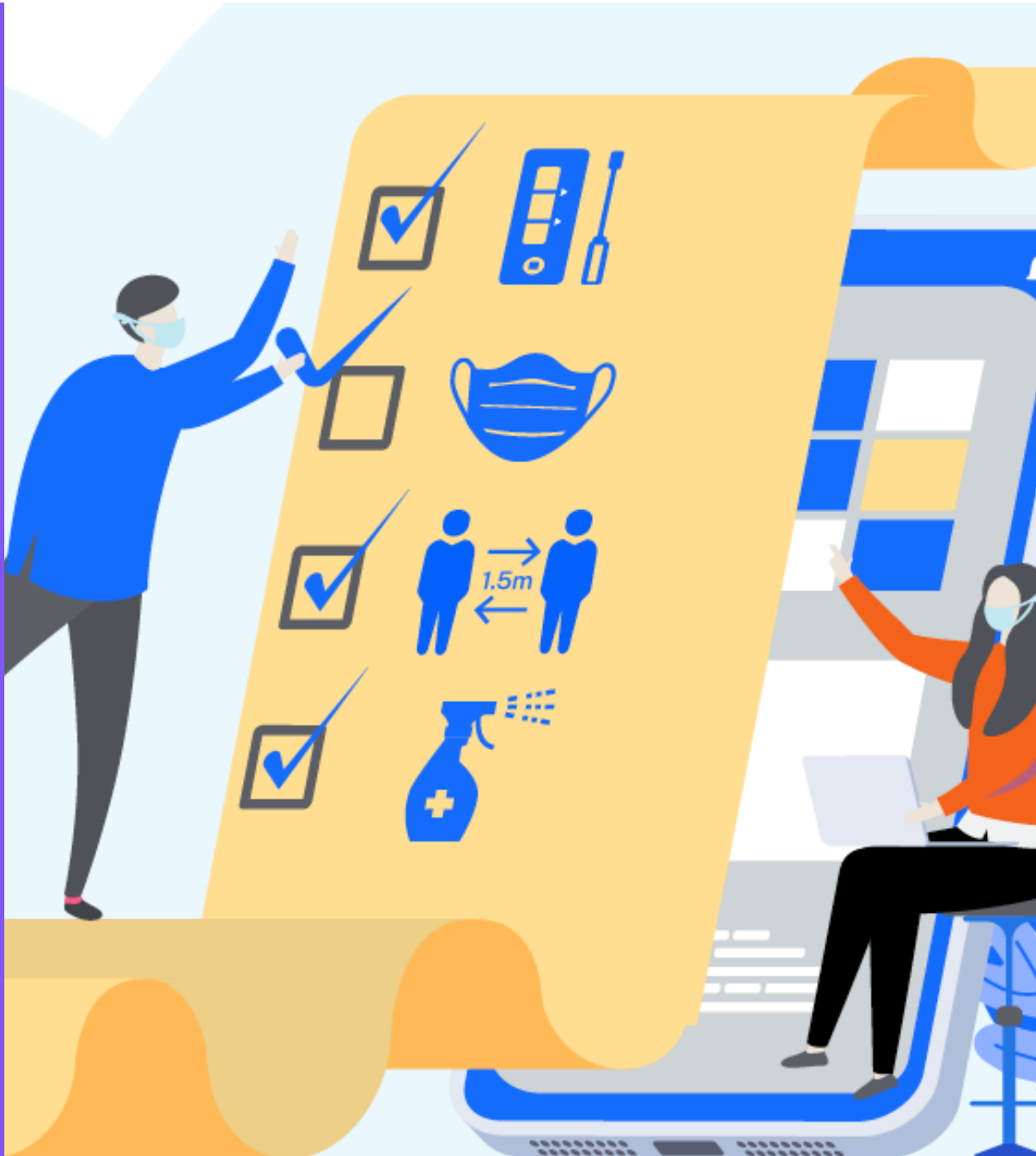
Because of the various changes in the COVID-19 landscape and as part of our ongoing risk management across the Department of Transport in June this year we commenced a review of the measures that we use to keep people safe from COVID-19 in the workplace.

This review included seeking advice from safety, consulting with our people and considering the latest NSW Health advice.



Safety consultation

- More than 6,100 workers across Transport agencies provided feedback in the COVIDSafe Measures Safety consultation.
- A diverse range of responses were received with many workers strongly supporting some controls and others feeling the same controls were no longer reasonably practicable.
- Measures including physical distancing, educational content, cleaning, sanitisation and ventilation are strongly supported by workers who participated in consultation.
- Feedback on mask wearing, contact tracing and vaccination had mixed responses from workers who participated in consultation.





Safety consultation

Vaccination recommendation

After considering the feedback we received from the COVIDSafe Measures Safety consultation, as well as advice from our safety team and our Chief Health Officer, we propose moving to a position of **strongly recommending** that workers keep up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, **but not mandating vaccination.**





Proposal for consultation

What we want your feedback on

The Department of Transport is proposing that from 1 September 2022, the Department of Planning and Environment Vaccination Policy and the requirement to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 will no longer apply to our workers and visitors to Department of Transport workplaces.

While vaccination would no longer be mandated, it would be strongly recommended that workers are up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations and our people would continue to be supported to get vaccinated.

Safety controls would be deployed dependent on the risk environment and operating context.

If adopted, this would mean that:

- From 1 September 2022:
 - the Department of Planning and Environment Vaccination Policy would cease to apply, however, safety controls would continue to operate
 - workers and visitors will not be required to be vaccinated or have an approved exemption to attend our workplaces; and
 - roles advertised will no longer require vaccination
 - employees not in the workplace due to vaccination requirements would return to workplaces from 1 September, subject to training and compliance requirements.
- If the proposal proceeds there will be a transition period (between the announcement of a final decision and 1 September 2022) to support the return of people to the workplace. During this period, employees who have not complied with the Policy may be required to:
 - work from home where tasks can be performed from home; or
 - be available to undertake activities such as Teams/phone meetings and training.



COVIDSafe Controls

To maintain safe working environments we would continue to have COVID-19 safety controls embedded within our work health and safety frameworks and processes.

Safety controls would include:



Our key control measures will be cleaning and diagnostic tools, as well as ventilation enhancements in identified locations.



Mask wearing on public transport will continue while we assess the risk environment. Further announcements about the use of this control will be made after that period. Masks may remain necessary in certain circumstances.



We will continue contact tracing activities while we monitor the risk environment however QR codes (Transport check-in) will be phased out. We will retain capability to re-introduce check-ins if the risk environment requires this control.



Education campaigns will be specific to the risk environment to help build local capability in managing COVID-19 in our workplaces.



Other safety activities

- For workplace contacts with a confirmed COVID-19 case we will transition to the 'household' contact requirements set by [NSW Health](#) but not immediately. This will require workers to comply with any additional controls set by NSW Health for household contacts when exposed in the workplace.
- A digital risk tool will be developed to help with decision making on which safety controls to use in operational environments. Until the tool is introduced existing risk assessment process continue to be used to determine controls.
- We will strongly recommend that employees stay up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations in accordance with ATAGI advice. However, if the risk environment changes, or government requirements are amended, a review of the use of vaccinations as a control will be undertaken.
- COVID-19 vaccination may still be a control to undertake particular activities, for example where there is a requirement to be vaccinated to enter external sites. However, it is not proposed as a requirement for any roles.
- We will continue to monitor the latest [NSW Health](#) advice.



Rationale for change

Why Transport is proposing these changes

There have been vast improvements in access to diagnostic testing tools. Our on-site and self-testing RAT pilots assist in reducing the risk of positive COVID-19 cases coming into our workplaces.

We know that at least 97% of our workforce is double vaccinated, and we will continue to encourage our people to get boosted, providing vaccination protection across our workforce.

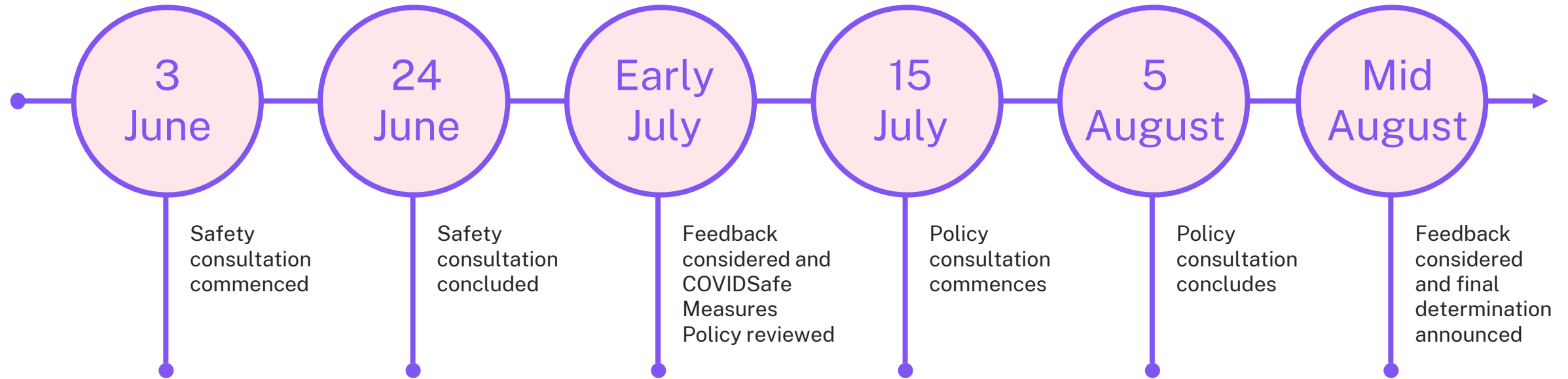
There are proposed improvements to ventilation and hygiene across our workplaces that will have an impact on potential transmission of COVID-19.

There is evidence of waning immunity from 2 doses of vaccination which means its effectiveness reduces over time.

We will continue to review COVID-19 risk and all available controls. This may include consideration of vaccination requirements in the future.



Consultation timeline





How to provide feedback

Have your say

If you would like to give feedback on the proposed changes, complete the [online feedback form](#) which will be open until 11:59pm 5 August 2022.

Completing the online feedback form requires respondents to input their work email address. Where employees choose to provide anonymous feedback their email will not be recorded.

You can also provide feedback to your union representative.

If you still have questions or would like to understand some of our responses to feedback, you can read our [FAQs](#).

Workers who do not have a work email address or are restricted in other ways from providing feedback via the online form can download a [printable version](#).

Completed forms must be sent to pandemic.transformation.program@transport.nsw.gov.au



More information and support



[Stayinformed](#)

[FAQs](#)

[COVIDSafe](#)
[Hub](#)



[People & Culture](#)
[Business Partners](#)



[Employee Assistance Program](#)

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free and confidential counselling service available to you and your immediate family.



[Staywell Hub](#)

For support and wellbeing resources



[Mental Health First Aiders](#)

For support and wellbeing resources