

# COVID-19 Vaccination Organisational Policy

## CONTROL:

Policy Type:	Administrative
Authorised by:	Council
Head of Power:	N/A
Responsible Officer:	Governance and Compliance Manager
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## 1. Policy statement

Council acknowledges the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to our Workers and community.

Council is committed to mitigating risks and protecting our Workers and the community.

This Policy outlines the risk-management approach to responding to the COVID-19 virus when assessing COVID-19 vaccination requirements for identified high risk positions and work activities and how council will collect and use COVID-19 vaccination status data to ensure compliance.

Council may mandate a COVID-19 vaccination or require any Worker or Contractor to be COVID-19 vaccinated as a condition of employment where Council determines such vaccination status to be necessary in order to meet government requirements or directives, based on Council's own risk assessment and effort to mitigate risk in the interests of workplace health and safety, and/or requirements of third parties, contractors and suppliers.

Council encourages our Workers and Contractors to become vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus for their own wellbeing, and that of their families, work mates and the community.

## 2. Policy outcome

Together we create a positive safety culture that has as its strong foundation, a workplace that is healthy and safe. We are relentless and vigilant in preventing injury and illness and creating a place where the management of community and Worker safety is world class. Our people are engaged and empowered, and we work in a unified way to deliver a healthy, kind, and safe place to work.

Council aspires to be a reputable and highly regarded organisation that focuses on maximising health, safety and wellbeing through the effective management of all health and safety risks associated with COVID-19 when conducting Council's business or undertakings.

## 3. Policy scope

This Policy applies to all Council Workers, existing and prospective, including employees, contractors, Contingent Workers, and volunteers (Workers). It also applies to Visitors attending any of Council's workplaces and venues (Visitors).

## 4. Policy commitment

Council employees and Councillors covered in the scope of this policy consistently demonstrate and uphold the intent, objectives and principles of this policy. Nothing in this policy requires or authorises an employee of Council or Councillor to act in any way that is contrary to law. Any instances of non-compliance will be managed in accordance with any relevant codes of conduct, policies and legislation dealing with conduct and/or disciplinary action.

## 5. Guiding Principles

The following principles guide this Policy:

- Council's response to COVID-19 is risk-based, in that Council will seek to eliminate or mitigate the risk as far as reasonable and practicable.
- Due to the diverse nature of Council's business operations, all work areas assess and manage risks associated with COVID-19 and the health and safety of Council's Workers and Visitors in a preventative way.
- Council works to eliminate or mitigate risks associated with COVID-19 to Workers and Visitors whilst protecting our business and resources.
- Council consults, collaborates, coordinates, and co-operates with stakeholders and industry partners to facilitate seamless management of Health and Safety Risks.
- Council works to ensure compliance in line with legislative obligations and government directives.

## **6. Risk Management**

- In recognition of the risks posed by the COVID-19 virus, as well as workplace health and safety obligations incumbent upon both the organisation and Workers, this Policy requires Council Workers who are identified as being in high risk groups to be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Council reserves the right to mandate the COVID-19 vaccination for Workers in instances where:
  - Government Health Directives or regulations require Workers to be vaccinated to participate in activities aligned with the Worker's ordinary course of duty.
  - Council COVID risk assessment identifies a work activity and the Workers as being in a high-risk group. Council COVID risk assessment has identified that it is reasonable and practicable to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations. This is on the basis that: there is interaction or likely interaction between employees and other people such as customers, other Workers or the public in the normal course of employment particularly where the close contact could be with people who are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of coronavirus.
  - For parts of the workforce where it is in the overall best interest from a customer, community, employee, safety, or business continuity standpoint; or
  - When a third party, contractor or supplier imposes a requirement on council for its Workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to conduct business.
- Workers who are not required by law to be vaccinated against COVID-19 but have otherwise been identified by Council to be in a "high risk group", must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to continue with their employment and/or before commencing relevant employment with Council.
- Workers who are in a "high risk group" will be notified of this status by Council and consultation will occur before this status is enforced.

## **7. COVID-19 Vaccinations – Voluntary**

Council encourages all Workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Workers should seek advice from their medical practitioner and, unless medically advised not to, should receive the COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible.

## **8. COVID-19 Vaccinations – Mandatory**

When a Worker is required to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment in order to conduct the duties of their position, the Worker will be advised by Council of this requirement and instructed to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination in accordance with the direction. The Worker must have received a first or second or subsequent dose of a COVID-19 vaccination by the dates specified in the Public Health Directive or as directed by Council.

Council will consult with each Worker regarding this direction. All employees have a code of conduct obligation to follow lawful and reasonable directions to get vaccinated.

When recruiting to a vacancy, the advertisement will clearly state that a requirement of the position and the appointment is subject to the person fully satisfying the COVID-19 vaccination requirements. Evidence of satisfying the vaccination requirement must be provided as part of the recruitment process to satisfy this requirement.

Positions that have been identified as having a requirement for the Worker to have the COVID-19 vaccination will be required to have both doses, as a part of their conditions of employment. These Workers must maintain vaccine protection. Therefore, these Workers are required to receive the prescribed subsequent doses of a COVID-19 vaccination (ie Booster), as may be approved by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation.

Entry to Council worksites and workplaces including community locations, venues and facilities will be subject to restrictions dependent upon a Worker's and community member's vaccination status. Council will enforce entry restrictions based on government health directives and legislative requirements or based on Council's own risk assessments, aimed to mitigate risk, protect Workers and the community and ensure best practice workplace health and safety. Acknowledging the changing COVID-19 environment, these restrictions are subject to change.

## **9. COVID-19 Vaccinations – Support**

Council will support employees to take reasonable time off work to get the COVID-19 vaccination. Employees must liaise with their Supervisor to arrange a convenient time to be away from the workplace to receive the vaccination so that any impacts on teams can be managed and minimised.

## **10. Worker COVID-19 Vaccination Records**

Council requests evidence of a Worker's vaccination status for those positions identified as a high risk COVID-19 position which the COVID-19 vaccination is mandated to support compliance with government requirements and for Council's own internal policies regarding Vaccination and work health and safety legislation. The Worker must provide a copy of the immunisation statement from the Australian Immunisation Register.

Evidence of COVID-19 vaccination status will be held securely as Worker record in the same manner as other confidential and sensitive personal information supplied during the course of employment.

Council may use this information to manage physical attendance at work sites, communicating and coordinating with the community and other stakeholders that Workers might come into contact in the course of their duties, and planning COVID-19 policies and responses.

Council may disclose de-identified information to the parties mentioned above.

### **10.1. Contractor Records**

Council may require evidence of a Contractor's COVID-19 vaccination status to ensure compliance with both current and future government and business requirements in relation to attendance to some Council workplaces.

Council will communicate with each Contractor to request this information as and when required. Evidence of COVID-19 vaccination status will be held as securely as a Contractor record in a similar manner to other confidential information for the Contractor.

## **11. Exemptions**

Where a Worker has a medical exemption from the COVID-19 vaccination, this medical exemption should be provided in place of the COVID-19 vaccination certificate. The medical exemption must be issued in accordance with ATAGI guidelines and specifically state why the Worker is unable to be COVID-19 vaccinated.

Where a Worker has an exemption based on religious reasons from the COVID-19 Vaccine, evidence must be provided from the faith leader / religious organisation in place of the COVID-19 vaccination certificate.

Council might adopt other safety controls to mitigate the risk of COVID-19.

## **12. Evidence of vaccination or exemption**

Workers, Volunteers and Visitors will need to continue to carry proof of Vaccination in order to comply with business or government requirements. This should be in a format which aligns with accepted practice for providing confirmation of COVID-19 vaccination, such as a digital certificate or vaccine passport.

If applicable, Employees, Volunteers and customers will also need to carry evidence of a medical exemption.

## **13. Roles and responsibilities**

All Workers and customers have a role in management of health and safety at Council. Health and safety management responsibilities differ based on the 'risk level' and are defined in Council's Health and Safety Management System. With personal commitment and active participation, we will endeavour to achieve outstanding work health and safety standards and deliver on our commitment to provide a safe working environment.

## 14. Leave

Employees who are unwell or who are required to provide care to immediate family members because of contracting COVID-19 will need to take personal or carers leave.

Up to 5 days paid pandemic leave is available to Council staff each calendar year under the following circumstances if you cannot work from home: -

- 1 The employee is required to care for their child/children due to the closure of their school;
- 2 If you are a **close contact**, as defined in the relevant Chief Health Officer Directive, of a diagnosed case of COVID-19 and you don't have symptoms, the period between the start of your quarantine and your release from quarantine after a negative day 6 test.

Employees must provide evidence of both the test dates and test results for Council records.

## 15. Definitions

Term	Definition
Worker	Includes Council employees, contractors, contingent Workers, volunteers
Vaccination	COVID-19 vaccination approved by the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) and administered at a dosage as recommended by Australian medical authorities
Evidence of vaccination	A copy of the Worker or volunteer's immunisation history statement from the <a href="#">Australian Immunisation Register</a>

## 16. Related legislation, policies, strategies and documents

All individuals engaged in dealings within the scope of this policy are required to fulfil the ethical and behavioural obligations as defined in legislation. In the event of an inconsistency between any provision of this policy and any provision of the following related legislation, policies, strategies and documents, the provisions of the related legislation, policies, strategies and documents shall prevail, unless the CEO or Council expressly waive a provision of this policy by prior agreement. For further assistance please contact the Manager of Corporate Governance.

- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)
- Public Records Act 2002
- Work Health & Safety Act 2011
- Work Health & Safety Regulation 2011
- Council Work Health and Safety Plan for COVID 19
- Council Standard Risk Assessment for COVID 19
- Council Risk Management Policy
- Council Work from Home Policy
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
- Human Rights Act 2019
- Industrial Relations Act 2016
- Council Human Resources Policy
- QLD Local Government Industry (Stream A, B, C) Award – State 2017

### VERSION CONTROL:

Previous Version Number	Adopted/Approved Date