

Office of Local Government



COVID-19 COUNCIL UPDATE

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Thursday 20 August 2020

Critical service workers and council enforcement

Councils are reminded that they are required to check and ensure that critical service workers employed or engaged by the Council are self-isolating between performing their duties.



Under the Public Health Order, critical services include:

- movement of freight on a commercial basis
- movement of persons on a commercial basis
- medical, hospital, dental or veterinary care
- Commonwealth defence and security services
- mining, agriculture, construction, energy or manufacturing
- environmental cleaning and disinfection in a workplace or other non-residential premises to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on a commercial basis that is not available locally, and

- 'specified critical' agricultural workers who live in Victoria but need to work in NSW within 100km of the NSW/Victorian border.

Councils are also reminded that:

- They should request use of NSW based staff wherever possible
- Critical Workers Permits should only be issued under limited circumstances
- Critical service workers who live in a declared region do not need to obtain a border entry permit, and
- For those who live in a non-border region their organisation will need to register them for a COVID-19 NSW border entry permit.

Organisations employing critical service workers **in a non-border region** may be eligible to register for COVID-19 border entry permits for workers, providing the service is:

- highly specialised
- not available locally in the same or substantially the same form, and
- not able to be provided remotely.

Clients of self-employed critical service worker who are receiving their services are also able to register for a border entry permit for them.

The employer, or the client (if applicable), will need to certify that the work being carried out is highly specialised and can only be done by the particular worker(s).

Those residing in the declared border region and only providing critical services within the border region do not need to register.

For more information and to obtain a permit, please [click here](#).

Changes to NSW-Queensland border restrictions

As of today (August 20) persons are now able to enter Queensland from a declared COVID-19 hotspot for essential health care without an exemption when the health care cannot be provided in the hotspot.

Essential health care is any:



- Queensland Children's Hospital appointment confirmed in writing by the hospital
- Appointment at a Queensland hospital and health service or associated outreach location, confirmed in writing by the service
- Appointment at a licensed Queensland private health facility or ancillary clinic or service, confirmed in writing by the service or health practitioner
- Appointment at an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Service confirmed in writing by the service, or
- Appointment with a prescribed health practitioner at another premises, confirmed in writing by the provider.

Changes have also been made to the areas included in the declared NSW-Queensland border zone. To view the updated areas please [click here](#).

The border zone pertains to people who live in Queensland but work or go to school in their neighbouring border town, or people who live in NSW but come to work or school in their neighbouring border town in Queensland.

Border zone residents can cross the border for any purpose.

For more information on the current Queensland border restrictions, please [click here](#).



Agriculture Worker Permits to cross Victorian border now available

A new Critical Service Worker Permit is now available for agriculture workers allowing them to cross the NSW-Victorian border.

The permit is for 'specified critical' agricultural workers who live in Victoria but need to work in NSW within 100km of the NSW/Victorian border.

These workers will need to comply with the relevant COVID-19 Safety Plan and follow strict conditions including for staying overnight and self-isolating when not working.

People who qualify for a Border Region Critical Worker Permit can still access that permit, including NSW residents.

NSW residents who travel into Victoria must return via Sydney airport and

quarantine for 14 days (excluding those with permits and exemptions).

For more information on the critical agriculture permit, please [click here](#).



Updated recommendations for community sport

Following the distribution of the Chief Health Officer's letter to community sport organisations, NSW Health has provided further

advice to assist community sport organisations in implementing the additional recommendations noted in the letter.

Organisations are encouraged to read both [the letter](#) and [the advice/FAQ document](#) to ensure they make informed decisions.

The following recommendations were to be implemented from yesterday (August 19). They are anticipated to remain in place for the next six weeks.

The recommendations include the request for community sport organisations to:

- Cease activities that result in the mixing of participants and staff from different regions, for example by ceasing zone, regional or State championships or competitions
- Cease any activities that result in overnight stays (e.g. multi-day training camps) due to increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in residential-type settings with shared facilities
- Cease face-to-face social activities relating to community sports (e.g. award ceremonies, end-of-season social gatherings, post-training group dinners)
- Avoid carpools or bus travel with people from different household groups where possible, and
- For local activities, limit spectators to one parent only, where the child requires parental supervision during the sporting activity.

State sporting organisations, state sporting organisations for people with a disability and other sector organisations are advised to read the information and determine how the recommendations and advice impact on their activities.

The advice will continue to be updated with further clarifications from NSW Health as the situation evolves.

OLG webinar with Minister Dominello

The Office of Local Government (OLG) today hosted a council webinar with the Minister for Customer Service Victor Dominello (pictured).



The webinar will be available on [the OLG website](#) shortly.

The webinars are part of a series coordinated by Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock with relevant Ministers and public officials across Government to keep mayors and general managers up to date on the latest COVID-19 information and answer their questions.

Further council webinars will be announced in due course.



Information and resources

[Guidelines for COVID Safe workplaces](#)
Safety plans for a range of businesses and organisations can be found [here](#), and those in the sport and recreation sector [here](#).

[Local government toolkit](#)

The Department of Customer Service has prepared a toolkit for councils regarding the [Victoria-NSW border closure](#).

[Job Retention Allowance payment applications](#)

Councils can still apply for the Job Retention Allowance payment of \$1,500 per fortnight, per eligible employee. Find out how in this [circular](#).

[Detailed OLG guidance to councils](#)

Councils can access detailed guidance on:

- [Local government legislative amendments](#)
- [Local government economic stimulus package](#)
- [The latest Public Health Order](#)

[Quicklinks](#)

Councils can access the latest information and resources about COVID-19 on the [NSW Government](#), [NSW Health](#), [Commonwealth Government](#), [Commonwealth Department of Health](#), and [NSW Office of Local Government](#) websites.

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