

s47F

**From:** KELLY, Paul  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 March 2023 1:54 PM  
**To:** s47F ; s47F  
**Subject:** QANTAS - Correspondence to CMO - Vaccination in Aviation Industry 1 July 2021  
**Attachments:** 01072021 - AHPPC - Aviation Vaccine - Qantas Group.pdf

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** s47F <s47F@qantas.com.au>  
**Date:** July 1, 2021 at 13:39:13 GMT+10  
**Subject:** Qantas to AHPPC re vaccination innAviation Industry  
**To:** KELLY, Paul <s47F@health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s47F <s47F@qantas.com.au>, s47F <s47F@qantas.com.au>

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Dear Professor Kelly,  
Please find the attached correspondence in relation to the matter of vaccination policy in the Aviation industry and matters referred to the AHPPC.

Regards,

s47F

s47F

s47F

Group Medical Services  
Qantas Airways Limited

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\*\*\*\*\*

[SEC=OFFICIAL]



1 July 2021

Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer; and  
Chair of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee  
Department of Health  
GPO Box 9848  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: [s47F@health.gov.au](mailto:s47F@health.gov.au)

Dear Professor Kelly,

**RE NATIONAL CABINET STATEMENT - COVID-19 VACCINATIONS FOR AVIATION WORKERS**

I refer to the statement issued following the National Cabinet meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Two items in particular in the statement will affect the Qantas Group and the aviation industry generally.

The first was National Cabinet's endorsement of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee's (AHPPC) advice to require the vaccination and testing of Quarantine workers, including those involved in transportation. The second was National Cabinet's agreement to seek AHPPC's advice on COVID-19 vaccination requirements for aviation, interstate freight transport and mining (FIFO) workers.

The Qantas Group acknowledges that any decision to mandate vaccinations must be taken with the greatest of care. In Qantas' view, the need for a consistent, national approach to the mandating of vaccination for any cohort, the vulnerability of essential air services to the impacts of COVID-19 exposure, and the capacity for essential air services to accelerate the geographical spread of COVID-19 all provide a strong case for the mandating of vaccination for all aviation operational staff in Australia. This issue is compounded by the recent outbreaks across Australia associated with the B.1.617.2 Delta Variant of Concern. It is Qantas' belief that such a mandate would need to be supported by improved access to the vaccine for those staff.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Qantas Group has always supported appropriate and consistent industry measures that safely mitigate the risk (likelihood, consequence and transmissibility) of COVID-19 for employees, the travelling public and the broader population.

Working with Government and industry, the Qantas Group with other industry players has successfully implemented a broad and holistic range of COVID-safe flying controls across domestic and international operations. These measures continue to provide protections for air travel, evidenced by extremely low levels of inflight transmission.

However, in circumstances where New South Wales has implemented a vaccine mandate for specific international facing roles, and the National Cabinet is seeking advice from the AHPPC on vaccination requirements, the Qantas Group believes there is a strong case for a Federal mandate for vaccination of all operational aviation personnel, including domestic air and ground workers.

Extensive empirical evidence and the robust assurance activities of the Therapeutic Goods Administration demonstrate the safety and effectiveness of the currently approved vaccines in Australia and that vaccination is the most effective and sustainable risk control available to any person or industry globally. Vaccination in addition to the existing suite of controls addresses the



unique risk factors and consequences of the aviation environment that are otherwise difficult to eliminate.

### **Avoidance of spread from higher transmission to lower transmission communities**

The primary controls for the spread of COVID-19 are the public health orders imposed by States and Territories during periods of increased community transmission, including, in particular, the stay-at-home orders and/or border closures that operate during local outbreaks.

Essential workers, including aviation industry workers, appropriately operate under an exemption from such controls. Consequently, essential workers who travel from an area of higher to lower community prevalence can inadvertently contribute to the spread of COVID-19 into lower endemicity communities. The geographical reach, not just across suburbs but across States, means aviation has a different consequential impact compared with other essential industries. Examples of this are evident in the current NSW-based outbreak, including an essential mineworker who attended work in the Northern Territory, and another airline's cabin crew member who operated five sectors during their infectious period.

It should also be acknowledged that close contact between people is an unavoidable part of essential aviation work. The primary public health mitigations of stay-at-home, time minimisation during social activities, and strict physical distancing cannot consistently apply.

### **The NSW Mandate and national consistency**

The NSW Government has mandated vaccination for airport workers who provide services to 'relevant persons'. A 'relevant person' means anyone arriving in NSW who has been outside of Australia or New Zealand in the past 14 days. Airport workers include airport staff, airline/freight staff, ground handlers, caterers, cleaners, customer service agents, ramp workers, baggage handlers, engineers, security and other private contractors. For the moment, the public health order excludes Trans-Tasman travellers from the definition of 'relevant persons' and does not capture freight flying crew and others in the international airport who do not provide services to 'relevant persons'. NSW Health has suggested that position may change. No other State has yet introduced similar legislation, yet the risk is identical in each State and Territory. In fact, in States and Territories where international and domestic operations share passenger terminals and operational facilities, unlike Sydney, the risk may be greater.

The Qantas Group has begun implementing the NSW public health order across its Sydney International Airport workforce, and working with its suppliers and contractors to ensure their compliance. However, the vaccination requirement for certain staff highlights real anomalies, none of which appear to the Qantas Group to be reasonable or practical in the long term. As examples, the "escape" of COVID-19 strains from hotel quarantine facilities and in the latest NSW outbreak from transport workers, have resulted in the nationwide spread of the virus, including through domestic airline passengers, and most recently a domestic cabin crew member.

Further, as airline employees from different functions are required to interact with each other, a whole of operation perspective is required, not just highlighting those in clearly customer facing roles.

### **Maintaining resilient essential air services**

As critical national infrastructure, aviation is required to maintain essential air corridors, ensuring the movement of eligible persons and to support essential freight, in, out and around the country.

Existing robust risk mitigations cannot entirely control for an employee unwittingly attending work with COVID-19 infection or a customer inadvertently travelling while infectious. While there is



negligible risk of onboard transmission of COVID-19, the potential infection of domestic staff at airports, terminals and associated infrastructure – including the regular interaction with other tech and cabin crew, as well as ground, customer service and baggage/ramp crew – and their potential onward transmission at the point of departure, transit and arrival (e.g. airport terminals and then their community), means that nationally critical workgroups and workplaces are vulnerable to being effectively decommissioned when a worker or customer is infected with COVID-19. Recent examples include:

- the large numbers of workers who were required to quarantine when airport terminals have been designated as exposure sites;
- entire crews being designated as close contacts following a passenger being identified as COVID-19 positive post flight (despite the low risk profile and out of an abundance of caution); and
- the required closure of Qantas' entire Melbourne Freight operation when a small number of positive workers were identified in the workplace, compromising the ability to manage essential freight services.

#### **Aviation Industry Vaccination Mandate Request**

For the reasons set out above, the Qantas Group requests that AHPPC consider the following policy positions:

- nationally mandating COVID-19 vaccination for all operational aviation workers, both domestic and international, encompassing ground and aircrew;
- facilitating implementation of this mandate by ensuring all impacted individuals be included into a current eligibility category of the National COVID-19 Vaccination Program, ensuring priority access to available vaccines;
- establishing workplace vaccination hubs and prioritising supply to facilitate access in a timely way;
- developing a revised set of nationally consistent operational requirements for vaccinated aircrew during domestic border closures and restrictions.

Finally, we hope that mandatory vaccination of aircrew may create a pathway for the AHPPC to review the current controls on international aircrew who are subject to rolling 14-day home quarantine and other requirements with significant mental health and operational consequences.

The Qantas Group thanks the AHPPC for its continued efforts during this pandemic and consultation on matters affecting public health and the broader aviation industry.

Yours sincerely,

s47F

s47F

s47F

, Qantas Group

**s47F**

**From:** KELLY, Paul  
**Sent:** Monday, 5 July 2021 6:06 PM  
**To:** **s47F**; KELLY, Paul  
**Cc:** **s47F**; **s47F**; **s47F**; **s47F**  
**Subject:** RE: Qantas to AHPPC re vaccination innAviation Industry [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** CMO - Response to Qantas Group 5 July 2021.pdf

Good evening

Please see attached letter from Prof Paul Kelly.

Kind Regards

**s47F**

A/g Executive Assistant to Prof. Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer

Australian Government Department of Health  
02 **s47F** | **s47F**  
**s47F** @health.gov.au  
GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601



*The Department of Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continued connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to all Elders past and present.*

**From:** **s47F** <**s47F**@qantas.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 July 2021 1:38 PM  
**To:** KELLY, Paul <**s47F**@health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** **s47F** <**s47F**@qantas.com.au>; **s47F** <**s47F**@qantas.com.au>  
**Subject:** Qantas to AHPPC re vaccination innAviation Industry

**REMINDER:** Think before you click! This email originated from outside our organisation. Only click links or open attachments if you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Professor Kelly,  
Please find the attached correspondence in relation to the matter of vaccination policy in the Aviation industry and matters referred to the AHPPC.

Regards,

**s47F****s47F**

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Group Medical Services  
Qantas Airways Limited

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**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

**Chief Medical Officer**

s47F i

Qantas Group

Dear s47F i

I refer to your correspondence of 1 July 2021 concerning COVID-19 vaccinations for aviation workers.

The Australian Government continues to take a strong and decisive approach in responding to COVID-19, informed by the latest medical advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

I wish to assure you that National Cabinet remains committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all travellers and aviation industry workers. To strengthen end-to-end protection of Australians, a number of in-flight and in-airport measures have already been introduced on AHPPC's recommendations. Rapid antigen testing for Australians returning on direct flights from high risk countries was also introduced as an additional measure in the hierarchy of controls to minimise risk.

On 29 June 2021, in response to lessons learned from recent transmission events, current epidemiology and discussion through the Continuous Improvement Framework, the AHPPC recommended daily testing of quarantine workers to be implemented nationally. This also extends to workers involved in transport of quarantined individuals. National Cabinet has further asked AHPPC to consider the introduction of mandatory vaccination of aviation workers in Australia.

As you would be aware, the Prime Minister recently appointed Lieutenant General John Frewen to be the Coordinator General of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout under Operation COVID Shield. As part of this, the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce is exploring all available options to deliver vaccines, including through partnership with businesses.

I understand that the Coordinator General will be engaging with QANTAS and the aviation business community more broadly on the roll out of vaccines and I encourage you to work with him on this matter.



I note that frontline quarantine and border workers, which includes aviation staff who are in direct contact with returned international travellers, are already eligible for vaccination under Australia's priority cohorts. QANTAS staff who are interacting with returned travellers are recommended to receive a vaccination as soon as practicable if they have not already done so, noting that vaccinations for workers can also be requested by businesses as part of their Workplace Health and Safety requirements.

The Government appreciates the efforts of the Qantas Group aircrew in supporting the vital air bridge between Australia and the rest of the world and ensuring supply of critical services, such as repatriation and freight flights.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



s47F

Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer

5 July 2021

s47F

**From:** KELLY, Paul  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 March 2023 1:52 PM  
**To:** s47F ; s47F  
**Subject:** VIRGIN - Correspondence to the CMO - Vaccinations in Aviation Industry 1 July 2021  
**Attachments:** 2021 07 01 - CEO Jayne Hrdlicka Letter to CMO on COVID-19 Vaccinations.pdf

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**From:** s47F <s47F@virginaustralia.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 July 2021 7:28 PM  
**To:** KELLY, Paul <s47F@health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** s47F <s47F@health.gov.au>; s47F <s47F@virginaustralia.com>  
**Subject:** Correspondence to the CMO - Virgin Australia CEO

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Dear Professor Kelly

Please see attached from Jayne Hrdlicka.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can clarify anything further.

Regards

s47F



s47F | Chief Corporate Affairs Officer  
PO BOX 1034 Spring Hill QLD Australia 4004  
M +61 s47F  
E s47F@virginaustralia.com

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**s47F**

**From:** KELLY, Paul  
**Sent:** Monday, 5 July 2021 6:03 PM  
**To:** **s47F**; KELLY, Paul  
**Cc:** **s47F**; **s47F**; **s47F**; **s47F**  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence to the CMO - Virgin Australia CEO [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** CMO - Response to Virgin Australia 5 July 2021.pdf

Good evening

Please see attached letter from Prof Paul Kelly.

Kind Regards

**s47F**

A/g Executive Assistant to Prof. Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer

Australian Government Department of Health  
02 **s47F** | **s47F**  
**s47F** @health.gov.au  
GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601



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**From:** **s47F** <**s47F**@virginaustralia.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 July 2021 7:28 PM  
**To:** KELLY, Paul <**s47F**@health.gov.au>  
**Cc:** **s47F** <**s47F**@health.gov.au>; **s47F** <**s47F**@virginaustralia.com>  
**Subject:** Correspondence to the CMO - Virgin Australia CEO

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Dear Professor Kelly

Please see attached from Jayne Hrdlicka.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can clarify anything further.

Regards

**s47F**



s47F | Chief Corporate Affairs Officer  
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## Australian Government

### Department of Health

Chief Medical Officer

Ms Jayne Hrdlicka  
Chief Executive Officer  
Virgin Australia

Dear Ms Hrdlicka

I refer to your correspondence of 1 July 2021 concerning COVID-19 vaccinations for airline employees.

The Australian Government continues to take a strong and decisive approach in responding to COVID-19, informed by the latest medical advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

I wish to assure you that National Cabinet remains committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all travellers and aviation industry workers. To strengthen end-to-end protection of Australians, a number of in-flight and in-airport measures have already been introduced on AHPPC's recommendations. Rapid antigen testing for Australians returning on direct flights from high risk countries was also introduced as an additional measure in the hierarchy of controls to minimise risk.

On 29 June 2021, in response to lessons learned from recent transmission events, current epidemiology and discussion through the Continuous Improvement Framework, the AHPPC recommended daily testing of quarantine workers to be implemented nationally. This also extends to workers involved in transport of quarantined individuals. National Cabinet has further asked AHPPC to consider the introduction of mandatory vaccination of aviation workers in Australia.

As you would be aware, the Prime Minister recently appointed Lieutenant General John Frewen to be the Coordinator General of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout under Operation COVID Shield. As part of this, the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce is exploring all available options to deliver vaccines, including through partnership with businesses.

I understand that the Coordinator General will be engaging with Virgin Australia and the aviation business community on the roll out of vaccines and I encourage you to work with him on this matter.

I note that frontline quarantine and border workers, which includes aviation staff who are in direct contact with returned international travellers, are already eligible for vaccination under Australia's priority cohorts. Virgin Australia staff who are interacting with returned travellers are recommended to receive a vaccination as soon as practicable if they have not already done so, noting that vaccinations for workers can also be requested by businesses as part of their Workplace Health and Safety requirements.

I note the success you have had implementing innovative measures to encourage your staff to get vaccinated. The Therapeutic Goods Administration also recently released guidance about how businesses may safely and lawfully communicate about and encourage COVID-19 vaccinations, which is available at: [www.tga.gov.au/communicating-about-covid-19-vaccines](http://www.tga.gov.au/communicating-about-covid-19-vaccines). General Frewen will also explore with businesses ways that they are able to support the rollout within these arrangements.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer

5 July 2021

**s47F**

**From:** KELLY, Paul  
**Sent:** Friday, 24 March 2023 10:48 AM  
**To:** **s47F**  
**Subject:** A4ANZ - Correspondence to CMO - COVID-19 Vaccinations for air transport workers 1 July 2021  
**Attachments:** 1 Jul A4ANZ Letter to CMO Vaccination for airline workers.pdf

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**From:** **s47F** <**s47F**@a4anz.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 July 2021 5:41 PM  
**To:** KELLY, Paul <**s47F**@health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Vaccinations for air transport workers

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Dear Professor Kelly,

Please find attached a letter from Airlines for Australia & New Zealand, in response to the National Cabinet's request for AHPPC's advice on vaccination requirements for air transport workers.

Kind regards  
Alison Roberts

**Dr Alison Roberts**  
Chief Executive Officer

Airlines for Australia & New Zealand

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[www.a4anz.com](http://www.a4anz.com)





Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer and  
Chair of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee  
Department of Health  
via email: s47F@health.gov.au

**RE: Mandatory Vaccination of Airline Workers**

Dear Professor Kelly,

I write on behalf of Airlines for Australia and New Zealand (A4ANZ), the industry group representing international, domestic, regional, full service and low-cost carriers based in Australia and New Zealand, regarding the vaccination against COVID-19 for all operational airline workers.

In remarks following Monday's National Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister indicated that AHPPC has been tasked to come back with advice on mandatory requirements for vaccination in the air transport sector.

As AHPPC members would be aware, airlines already have in place comprehensive COVID-Safe measures to reduce and mitigate the risk of transmission during domestic and international travel. However, we believe that the additional protection conferred through vaccinating all front-line aviation workers, is an important and necessary addition to the existing hierarchy of controls.

The challenge being faced across the country from the most recent outbreak of the Delta strain has highlighted the need for additional controls to be in place for air crew responsible for facilitating the movement of people across wide geographic areas and domestic borders. For airlines to require their workforce to become vaccinated in the absence of an appropriate legal framework is already proving to be problematic, as the recent case with Alliance Airlines shows. The current NSW Health Public Health Order mandating COVID-19 vaccination for airport workers is a move in the right direction but it does not include domestic air crew. This leaves the airline sector – which has a uniquely mobile workforce, moving frequently between jurisdictions – without a nationally-consistent approach to this critically important issue.

A4ANZ is therefore seeking your consideration of a recommendation to:

- Mandate COVID-19 vaccination for all operational airline workers (encompassing ground and aircrew);
- Facilitate the implementation of relevant orders by moving these workers into a higher eligibility category of the National COVID-19 Vaccination Program, to ensure priority access to available vaccines;
- Establish workplace vaccination hubs to facilitate access;
- Develop a revised set of nationally-consistent operational requirements for vaccinated aircrew, including during domestic border closures and restrictions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

s47F

---

**Dr Alison Roberts, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Airlines for Australia & New Zealand**  
E: s47F@a4anz.com





**s47F**

**From:** KELLY, Paul  
**Sent:** Monday, 5 July 2021 6:12 PM  
**To:** **s47F**; KELLY, Paul  
**Cc:** **s47F**; **s47F**; **s47F**  
**Subject:** RE: COVID-19 Vaccinations for air transport workers [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** CMO - Response to Airlines for Australia and New Zealand 5 July 2021.pdf

Good evening

Please see attached letter from Prof Paul Kelly.

Kind Regards

**s47F**

A/g Executive Assistant to Prof. Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer

Australian Government Department of Health  
02 **s47F** | **s47F**  
**s47F** [@health.gov.au](mailto:s47F@health.gov.au)  
GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601



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**From:** Alison Roberts <**s47F** @a4anz.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 July 2021 5:41 PM  
**To:** KELLY, Paul <**s47F** @health.gov.au>  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Vaccinations for air transport workers

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Dear Professor Kelly,

Please find attached a letter from Airlines for Australia & New Zealand, in response to the National Cabinet's request for AHPPC's advice on vaccination requirements for air transport workers.

Kind regards  
Alison Roberts

**Dr Alison Roberts**  
Chief Executive Officer

Airlines for Australia & New Zealand

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**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

**Chief Medical Officer**

Dr Alison Roberts  
Chief Executive Officer  
Airlines for Australia & New Zealand

Dear Dr Roberts

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The Australian Government continues to take a strong and decisive approach in responding to COVID-19, informed by the latest medical advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

I wish to assure you that National Cabinet remains committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all travellers and aviation industry workers. To strengthen end-to-end protection of Australians, a number of in-flight and in-airport measures have already been introduced based on AHPPC's recommendations. Rapid antigen testing for Australians returning on direct flights from high risk countries has also been introduced as an additional measure in the hierarchy of controls to minimise risk.

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I understand that the Coordinator General will be engaging with the aviation business community on the roll out of vaccines and I encourage you to work with him on this matter.

I note that frontline quarantine and border workers, which includes aviation staff who are in direct contact with returned international travellers, are already eligible for vaccination under Australia's priority cohorts. Airline staff who are interacting with returned travellers are recommended to receive a vaccination as soon as practicable if they have not already done so, noting that vaccinations for workers can also be requested by businesses as part of their Workplace Health and Safety requirements.

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Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A grey rectangular box redacting a signature, with the text 's47F' written in red over it.

Professor Paul Kelly  
Chief Medical Officer

5 July 2021