

11 August, 2021

# Vaccine passports will open way to freedom

The pathway to reopening will rely on clearly delineating between those who have been vaccinated and those who have not. Thanks to a deal between the Commonwealth, Apple and Google, people can now link their Covid-19 vaccination records to their iPhone and Android devices.

This is the first step towards a world in which we are truly able to ‘live with Covid-19’ – where people will be able to emerge out of lockdown and reconnect with friends, family and workplaces.

Government is working closely with industry on what a new passport regime might look like in social and work settings.

We believe three actions should be taken now to ensure this new model is a success:

1. Nominate a start date for each industry
2. Require the NSW Government workforce to be vaccinated
3. Put in place public health orders that support other employers to require vaccines.

## **1) Nominate a start date for each industry**

The most pressing task is to set a date for when vaccine passports will be used across society – and this should be sooner rather than later.

In this new phase of the pandemic, people may have the right not to be vaccinated, but they shouldn’t have the right to put others in danger.

As part of this, government needs to nominate the industries that will have vaccine passports applied. These should include businesses with a high level of public contact, such as restaurants, gyms, hairdressers and cinemas.

Government could initiate this by piloting passports across some of these settings.

Setting a start date will help industries prepare their operations, and it will also provide a powerful incentive for people to get vaccinated now.

## **2) Require the NSW Government workforce to be vaccinated**

As the state's largest employer, NSW should lead from the front and mandate vaccines across its 400,000 workers.

If that proves too difficult, at least it should mandate vaccines for public servants who interact with the public, such as those working across the transport network, Service NSW centres and schools.

## **3) Put in place public health orders that support other employers to require vaccines**

Finally, government can send a strong signal to business by enshrining within its public health orders mandates for public-facing private sector workers to be vaccinated. We understand there will be a legal argument about requiring people to be vaccinated.

Public health orders provide the best support for businesses to set up sensible requirements – outlining the reasoning, the conditions and the limitations on such requirements.

For businesses that choose to do this – because they want to keep their workforce safe, or because they believe it will be important for giving confidence to their customers – government can help with public health orders that set the right tone and context.

All three of these measures depend on the effectiveness of our vaccine passport system.

## **International experience with vaccine passports**

Industry players are urging authorities to learn from other jurisdictions that have successfully implemented vaccine passports.

Many point to France's *Pass Sanitaire*, which launched on June 9 as the country reopened its borders for the summer. Under this model, people who have been vaccinated receive a paper vaccination certificate with a QR code that can be read by an app. This is allowing vaccinated people to watch a movie, go to a

restaurant or bar, or catch a train. It is also allowing international travellers to gain access to France's tourist attractions.

That kind of user-friendly model is one we should be following.

### **Designing for a seamless customer experience**

While digital vaccination records are already on offer in Australia, it's not yet clear how they will be used in practise.

If the Service NSW app can also serve as the vaccine passport, checking in at a restaurant would be easy: just scan the QR code and get the "green tick."

A key ingredient to the success of the French model is that it is an extension of the existing contact tracing QR app used throughout the pandemic. While NSW has had success with its Service NSW check-in system, the federal government has had more difficulty with its COVIDSafe app.

We support a national model but believe it has to be properly integrated with successful state-based services to ensure as little friction as possible for citizens. For this to happen, the Commonwealth Government needs to open up its API to Service NSW and other state-based systems.

### **Passports let people get back to work**

Once we can easily verify who has been vaccinated, we can let people back to work where it makes sense.

This is no more critical than in Sydney's west, where many tradies, logistics staff and construction workers have been prevented from working onsite. We're hearing some of the state's mega projects are operating with just 20 per cent of their workforce due workers being stuck in their western and southwestern Sydney homes. This will clearly cause delays to these projects and job losses among contractors and subbies.

We applaud government's decision to allow construction workers in these LGAs to leave if they meet new vaccination requirements.

### **It's time to send the strong signal that everyone needs to be vaccinated**



Interactions between fully vaccinated people are low risk. This applies to work, fun, religious services and social life in general.

By announcing now that vaccine passports will be the ticket back to public life, government sends the signal that will break through the noise, this is the expectation we have on everyone who is able: You do not have the right to put other people at risk, and we are all going to step up and do this.