Re-opening the International Border Advice to Industry – 18 April 2022

The Australian Government is further easing border restrictions

Arrangements from 18 April 2022

From 0000 AEST on 18 April 2022, travellers no longer need to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test result prior to boarding a flight to Australia. Travellers will continue to be required to provide evidence of their vaccination status prior to entering Australia.

Travel restrictions for Australians and permanent residents departing Australia will also be eased, with evidence of vaccination status only needing to be produced if asked for by an official.

The new arrangements have been updated within this advice document where appropriate.

Visa holders

Since 21 February 2022, all visa holders who are fully vaccinated in accordance with Australia's international border entry requirements are allowed to fly to Australia without needing an individual travel exemption.

Australia considers people to be fully vaccinated for international travel purposes if they have completed a primary course, including mixed doses, of Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved or recognised vaccines. The TGA will continue to assess and add to the list of approved or recognised vaccines.

All inbound travellers must declare their vaccination status to enter Australia and provide acceptable proof of vaccination.

Individuals are also considered fully vaccinated for international travel purposes if they;

- are under the age of 12 years and 3 months at the time of departure for international travel to Australia (whether vaccinated or not), or
- are under the age of 18 years at the time of arrival in Australia, when the child is travelling with at least one adult who meets the definition of fully vaccinated, or
- cannot be vaccinated for *eligible* medical reasons --- that is, vaccination is contraindicated (with evidence that meets Commonwealth requirements and subject to state and territory requirements).

Unvaccinated travellers should review whether they would be eligible for another category of travel exemption, noting the processing times and that the grounds for approving an exemption for travel are extremely limited. See: Unvaccinated travellers (homeaffairs.gov.au).

If an unvaccinated temporary visa holder has a compelling need to travel to Australia, an individual travel exemption can be requested through the Department of Home Affairs' Travel Exemption Portal. This advice includes immediate family members of Australian citizens, permanent residents or New Zealand citizens usually resident in Australia who do not meet vaccination requirements, who must provide proof of relationship before travel by submitting an exemption request through the Travel Exemption Portal.

A temporary visa holder who cannot present evidence that demonstrates they are fully vaccinated is not considered to be exempt from travel restrictions, unless they are covered by another exemption category (for

example, they are a permanent resident who is auto-exempt or immediate family member with an approved travel exemption).

Airlines must contact the Border Operations Centre (BOC) prior to boarding any passengers who are not an Australian citizen or permanent resident, who cannot demonstrate they are 'fully vaccinated', to confirm their travel exemption status.

Passenger Caps and Quarantine

Inbound travellers who do not meet the criteria or exemptions set out in this advice will be included in airline passenger caps if they are eligible to travel. They will also be subject to Australia's travel restrictions as well as state or territory quarantine requirements of the jurisdiction they arrive in. Passengers required to enter managed quarantine on arrival in Australia must be carried within passenger caps.

Whilst some jurisdictions may allow quarantine free travel for eligible travellers, others jurisdictions may impose modified quarantine arrangements. Travellers should always check and understand the entry requirements of the jurisdiction they plan to travel to prior to booking their travel. Further details on jurisdiction specific entry requirements can be found at: www.australia.gov.au/states

International passengers arriving in Australia are not automatically permitted to transit to another state or territory. Domestic travel restrictions may apply.

Digital Passenger Declaration

All passengers arriving by air into Australia should complete the Digital Passenger Declaration (DPD), unless they are flight crew. Passengers can start a DPD seven days before their flight, but must complete and submit it before departing for Australia.

The DPD contains a declaration regarding the passenger's vaccination status and passengers must be able to provide evidence that they made this declaration before boarding the aircraft. This is an enforceable requirement under the *Biosecurity (Entry Requirements—Human Coronavirus with Pandemic Potential) Determination 2022*. A person who fails to comply with the requirements under the determination may be liable to a civil penalty (fine) of 30 penalty units (currently $6,660 AUD). Passengers who do not make the declaration before boarding will experience delays when arriving in Australia.

Passengers who have not completed a DPD should be strongly encouraged to do so before uplift. They should be advised the DPD it is an enforceable requirement, and they must provide evidence they have completed the relevant declaration before boarding the aircraft. Only in exceptional circumstances should passengers be provided a manual (paper) declaration to complete instead of the electronic DPD. Those passengers with exceptional circumstances should retain the completed manual declaration and provide it to a relevant authority on arrival.

The DPD free mobile app can be downloaded from the App Store (Apple) or Google Play store (Android).

Passengers can also complete the online form at Digital Passenger Declaration (homeaffairs.gov.au).

Digital Passenger Declaration processing

Airlines **must continue to sight all documents** (including proof of vaccination, proof that passengers cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons and travel exemptions).

Airlines are required to ensure that passengers have completed a DPD prior to checking them in for travel to Australia. Proof of a completed DPD can be shown via the DPD summary screen either electronically or in hardcopy. The DPD summary indicates whether a passenger has met key health elements. Airlines must continue to check traveller's supporting documentation.

The DPD health summary outcomes are:

- **Complete** – the information they have entered in their declaration indicates they meet COVID-19 health requirements for boarding. Airline check-in staff must continue to confirm vaccination certificates for passengers presenting with a Health Summary status of 'complete'. The following outlines the key elements a passengers needs to meet to receive a 'complete' status on the DPD:

- A passenger must have provided details (either Australian issued International COVID vaccination certificate scan or manual input) to show they meet the definition of fully vaccinated

- **Incomplete –** means the passenger has not completed their health information section within the DPD. Please ask them to go back into their account and complete it. The DPD requests critical health information. They must be able to show evidence that they completed the critical information before boarding. Providing this information is an enforceable requirement.
- **Confirmation required at check-in** – means the passenger may have claimed an exemption from vaccination requirements. This will need to be confirmed at check-in. Airlines will decide if a passenger can travel. If they are allowed to travel to Australia, they may need to quarantine on arrival and be carried within the passenger cap.

Calculating days associated with travel rules

Where a travel rule stipulates a set number of days, such as the requirement for seven days to have passed since the final dose of vaccine in a course of immunisation, the scheduled departure date counts as day zero.

For example, where a passenger's flight is scheduled to depart on a Thursday (day zero), a final dose would need to be taken sometime on the previous Thursday (7 days prior). The same logic can be applied to other travel rules which stipulate a set number of days as a condition of the rule.

Verifying vaccination status

Passengers **vaccinated in Australia** must prove their vaccination history by presenting to airlines an Australian Government-issued International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) at the time of airport check-in for travel to Australia. Passengers can request their ICVC through an Australian Medicare online account in myGov, or the Express Plus Medicare app. Passengers without access to these online options can visit a Services Australia services centre or contact the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) on 1800 653 809.

The ICVC contains a secure Quick Response (QR) code based on ePassport technology. Airlines will need to authenticate the QR code digitally through a simple process of scanning the QR code with the Australian Government's official VDS-NC Checker app[1]. Alternatively, industry-led solutions, such as the IATA Travel Pass (from mid-November 2021), can also authenticate an ICVC if they have been updated to incorporate this functionality.

Passengers **vaccinated overseas** travelling to Australia may or may not have access to an Australian Government-issued ICVC. If not, they will need to present a foreign-issued vaccination certificate instead. Airlines will need to inspect the certificate to confirm that they are in an acceptable format and show that the passenger is fully vaccinated (see below). Passengers travelling to Australia who present a foreign vaccination certificate will also have to make a legally binding attestation (preferably in their Digital Passenger Declaration (DPD) that their certificate is true and that they are fully vaccinated.

What 'fully vaccinated' means

Australia considers people to be fully vaccinated for international travel purposes if they have completed a primary course, including mixed doses**,** of Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved or recognised vaccines. Current vaccines and dosages accepted for the purposes of travel are:

- Two doses at least 14 days apart of:
  - AstraZeneca Vaxzevria
  - AstraZeneca Covishield
  - Pfizer/Biontech Comirnaty
  - Moderna Spikevax or Takeda

[1] The Visible Digital Seal for Non-Constrained Environments (VDS-NC) Checker app by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is available from the Apple and Google Play stores.

  - Sinovac Coronavac
  - Bharat Covaxin
  - Sinopharm BBIBP-CorV (for people under 60 years of age on arrival in Australia)
  - Gamaleya Research Institute Sputnik V
  - Novavax/Biocelect Nuvaxovid
- Or one dose of:
  - Johnson & Johnson/Janssen-Cilag COVID Vaccine.

Seven days must have passed since the final dose of vaccine in a course of immunisation for you to be considered fully vaccinated. Mixed doses count towards being fully vaccinated as long as all vaccines are approved or recognised by the TGA.

International travellers who arrive in a state or territory that imposes different vaccination requirements than that required for entry to Australia, are encouraged to access Australia's vaccination program to bring their vaccinations up to date.

The TGA is evaluating other COVID-19 vaccines that may be recognised for the purposes of travel in the future. Information on approved and recognised vaccines is available on the TGA website at www.tga.gov.au.

Children under 12 years of age

Children under 12 years of age will be treated as though they were fully vaccinated for the purposes of travel arrangements. Their age will be demonstrated by their passport.

Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children aged 12-17

Children under the age of 18 years are automatically exempt from travel restrictions, regardless of their vaccination status, when travelling with a fully vaccinated parent or guardian.

Children aged 12-17 years old entering Australia through New South Wales, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland are exempt from passenger caps and eligible for reduced quarantine requirements.

Where a child is travelling with parent/guardians who are all fully vaccinated, the entire family will be able to travel outside of passenger caps. If the child is travelling with unvaccinated adult family members, then the entire family group will be subject to managed quarantine and passenger caps.

Travellers to other states and territories should check to see what arrangements are in place for unvaccinated or partially vaccinated minors: www.australia.gov.au/states

Travellers unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons

People coming to Australia who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons need to provide acceptable proof of their medical contraindication to access the same travel arrangements as fully vaccinated travellers.

People who do not have a medical contraindication recorded in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) will need to show airline staff a medical certificate that indicates they are unable to be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine because of a medical condition. The medical certificate must be in English and include the following information:

- their name (this must match their travel identification documents)
- date of medical consultation and details of the medical practitioner
- details that clearly outline that they have a medical condition which means they cannot receive a COVID-19 vaccination (vaccination is contraindicated).

People who have received non-TGA approved or recognised vaccines should not be certified in this category and cannot be treated as fully vaccinated for the purposes of their travel.

The Australian Department of Health advises that previous infection with COVID-19 is not considered a medical contraindication for COVID-19 vaccination.

Information on medical conditions that mean COVID-19 vaccination is contraindicated is available on the Department of Health website. It also includes information on conditions **not** considered to be a contraindication for COVID-19 vaccination and **not** accepted for the purpose of a medical exemption to vaccination for travel to Australia. **See:** Evidence of Medical Contraindication to COVID-19 vaccine.

People travelling to Australia who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons should check the quarantine requirements in the state or territory to which they are travelling.

Assurance program for passengers who state they cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons (medical contraindication)

If the passenger has not completed a DPD

1. Continue to encourage them to fill in the DPD online. If they do not, or are unable to, provide them a manual declaration form as a last resort.
2. Continue to request proof to support their stated vaccination status.
    a. If the passenger states that they are unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons (that is, they are medically contraindicated), request their proof and **contact the BOC before uplift.**
3. **If BOC confirms that acceptable documentation has been provided**
    a. proceed with check-in process
    b. otherwise follow BOC advice

If the passenger has completed a DPD

1. Continue to request proof to support their stated vaccination status.
2. Verify the proof meets the standards required as outlined on Page 4 of this document.
3. Ensure that any alerts for the passenger have been actioned prior to uplift.

Vaccinated offshore - acceptable foreign vaccination certificate formats

Many foreign certificates come in digital formats that can easily be verified using government or industry apps. Many airlines are already familiar with these apps from using them to verify PCR test results. And many airlines have trialled, or are implementing, apps that can read multiple types of certificate, such as the IATA TravelPass. Airlines are strongly encouraged to use these apps, where available, to verify that foreign vaccination certificates are authentic.

A foreign certificate – paper or digital – is acceptable as long as:

- it was issued by a national or state/provincial-level authority or an accredited vaccination provider (for example a pharmacy, doctor or nurse)
- it is in English, or accompanied by a certified translation
- it shows:
    - the passenger's name as it appears in the passport
    - the passenger's date of birth or passport number or national identity number*
    - the vaccine brand name; and
    - either the date of each dose or the date on which the passenger completed a full course of immunisation.

*If a certificate contains only a national identity number, and if that number does not appear in the traveller's passport, then the traveller needs to show a national identity card that matches the identity number and name on the vaccination certificate.

If the certificate is not in English, it must be accompanied by a certified translation that includes the stamp or membership number of a professional translation association. The entire certificate must be translated, not just part of it.

If the foreign vaccination certificate is in a name that is different to what is in the passport, the passenger will need to provide evidence of their name, such as a marriage certificate or driver's licence.

Airlines should presume that a foreign vaccination certificate is acceptable unless there is a clear reason for doubt.

Verifying vaccination status of passengers travelling to Australia

For all travellers to Australia, the airline agent at or before airport check-in on departure will need to ensure that for each passenger:

- A DPD has been completed
  - Evidence of a completed DPD is demonstrated by either;
    - the official email a passenger receives on completion of their DPD, which the passenger can present in either digital or printed hardcopy form; or
    - the summary screen from the passengers DPD submission, which the passenger can present in either digital or printed hardcopy form.
  - Where evidence of a completed DPD cannot be produced at check-in, the airline should request the passenger completes a DPD online at that time.
  - Where a DPD cannot be completed for exceptional circumstances, the airline should request the passenger completes a manual (paper) declaration.
  - Where a manual declaration is undertaken, the airline should advise the passenger to retain their declaration for handing to the relevant authority on arrival in Australia.
- the passenger presents their vaccination certificate; and
- the vaccination certificate is an acceptable format and meets the definition of 'fully vaccinated'.

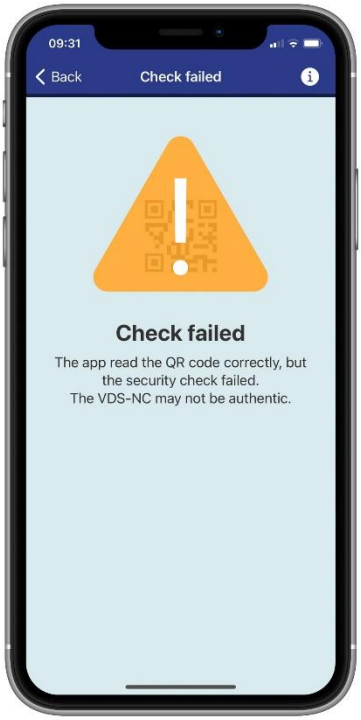
Please note that passengers who have completed a DPD <u>do not</u> need to provide a manual declaration.

Verifying vaccination status of passengers departing Australia

From 0000 AEST on 18 April 2022, unvaccinated Australians are no longer prohibited from departing Australia. However, airlines may continue to verify the vaccination status of Australians and permanent residents departing Australia informed by their carrier requirements.

Unvaccinated travel presents a risk to the personal health of travellers. Whether an unvaccinated traveller is permitted to travel, even if they refuse to show evidence of vaccination, will be a commercial decision for airlines.

ICVC authentication



If the VDS-NC Checker app reports that an ICVC QR code is 'Not a VDS-NC', or if the "Check failed" screen appears then the airline **must not** accept the ICVC. The passenger will not count as 'fully vaccinated'. The same applies if an industry app provides a similar message.

The QR code on an ICVC is larger than most, and can easily be read by recent model smartphones and devices. If a device is having trouble reading a printed QR code because of poor print quality or physical wear and tear on the QR code, airlines staff can try flattening the paper, adjusting the lighting or using the app's zoom function may assist.

If the paper QR code is unreadable, the traveller should be advised to print the certificate again, get a new one by contacting the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) on 1800 653 809, or show the QR code from a mobile device. Reading an ICVC QR code from a mobile device produces the best results.

No separation of vaccinated and unvaccinated travellers at airports or on aircraft

There is no Australian Government requirement to separate vaccinated and unvaccinated travellers at airports or on aircraft. Specific processing arrangements at each airport will be a matter for each airport operator, working with border agencies as required, to meet respective state or territory Government health requirements (which may include separation).

Facilitation of airline crew

Quarantine arrangements for airline crew are subject to respective state or territory requirements. Airlines need to check with respective Australian states and territories.

More information and support

The VDS-NC Checker app is available from the Apple and Google Play stores.

For more information on passengers obtaining an ICVC, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/covidvaccineproof.

Technical information on the security of the ICVC and eligibility to obtain one is available from passports.gov.au.

For privacy reasons, the Government has no service that airlines can contact to confirm whether a particular Australian certificate is genuine or has the correct details.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) provides information on vaccines health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines.

Glossary

Immediate family member	An immediate family member is: - a spouse - a de facto partner - a dependent child - a legal guardian
Australian Citizen	A person could be an Australian citizen by: - birth, OR - descent, OR - acquisition (naturalisation), OR - adoption. guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law
Australian Permanent Resident	A person who is: - the holder of a permanent resident visa