

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

NATIONAL RESOURCES SECTOR POSITION STATEMENT



The National Resources Sector Position Statement on COVID-19 Vaccinations supports the Australian Government's [COVID-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy due to commence in late February 2021](#) and its focus on priority groups for vaccination.

The Minerals Council of Australia, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA) and respective member companies have worked to develop a position statement to guide the way in which the industry undertakes its activities in the current environment.

This position statement should be read in conjunction with the [National Resources Sector COVID-19 Protocols and supporting guidance](#) and resources.

The intent and purpose of this position statement is to:

- Keep the resource sector workforce, families and communities safe and healthy
- Ensure that the resources sector does not adversely impact the health of regions and communities in which it operates and assists public health efforts where possible
- Maintain operations, business continuity and production for the benefit of industry, workers, and communities in which the industry operates, energy and fuel security and Australia's economy.

The sector recognises that the rollout of vaccines should complement the need for maintaining COVID-safe practices and quarantine arrangements as determined by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

This position statement highlights the ability of some resource industry operations to serve as vaccination centres, particularly in remote areas of Australia where there are close links with priority populations and communities.

It also details the importance of a nationally-agreed process for vaccination confirmation, how resources companies will approach workforce vaccination, an ongoing commitment to support workers, families and communities, and proposes certain types of resources workers for priority vaccination.

POSITION

1. The resources sector will actively support implementation of the government's vaccine rollout strategy

The sector will support the national vaccine rollout strategy as part of its ongoing work to keep workers, families and communities safe from COVID-19. The sector can assist in the following ways:

- At sites which are in close proximity to priority communities and populations, supporting access to qualified medical personnel to assist in vaccination rollout where appropriate
- Providing technical advice and assistance, including access to resources, medical and paramedical, logistics, community and other professionals where practical and appropriate
- Distributing vaccination health promotion information
- Transporting and storing equipment as appropriate
- Maintaining ongoing engagement and community support activities as part of local pandemic response and health planning and delivery activities.

The sector's approach will be based on and support the policies and implementation of the vaccination rollout by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

Governments have decided that vaccination against COVID-19 using vaccines that have gained or are pending approval by the relevant Australian authorities will not be mandatory. Workplace health and safety laws and diligent risk assessments at operations might mean vaccinations are required for some roles, along with other requirements of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, transportation providers, airports, local governments and Traditional Owner groups.

Public health advice, risk assessments and workforce requirements and locations should inform the development of company vaccination policies. These may include:

- [Proximity to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities](#), which are identified as being at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19
- The proportion of employees at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19
- Worker travel requirements.

Employers and employees have a duty to provide a safe and healthy workplace, including preventing and controlling the spread of infections.

Where an employee may have in-person contact with populations identified as at greater risk of severe illness, it may be lawful and reasonable to make it a condition of some employees' roles that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

Companies that may require vaccination for specific roles with a high risk of transmission should support access by employees to the vaccine. Employees will be able to demonstrate vaccination (or medical exemption) through [Express Plus Medicare](#) and [MyGov](#) apps and each company should develop a confidential record management procedure for employees for secure provision and recording of this information.

2. Governments should develop a nationally-agreed process for providing confirmation of vaccination

Governments should ensure there is minimal lag between an individual receiving a vaccination and its registration on the [Australian Immunisation Register](#).

Where a lag is unavoidable, a nationally-agreed process to enable a health professional to provide written confirmation of vaccine receipt should be established.

A validation process for vaccinations received overseas should be developed. This could help enable the safe movement of employees across domestic and international borders.

The resources sector will work with governments to support an appropriate validation process.

3. The sector will continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health plans

Throughout the pandemic, the resources sector has worked to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led health plans in a comprehensive and culturally-safe manner. During the vaccine rollout, the sector will continue to support these plans, including by:

- Maintaining active engagement with local Indigenous health organisations, land councils, Traditional Owner organisations and other groups to support health, hygiene and travel controls
- Promoting culturally-appropriate and tailored health information to workers and families
- Providing logistical and transportation assistance for equipment, goods and services

- Providing access to qualified medical, health and safety professionals to support the vaccination rollout as required and practical, consistent with local health plans
- Providing support to meet personal protective equipment, infrastructure and other community needs.

4. Protecting priority communities requires the prioritisation of some resources workers for vaccinations

Protecting priority populations from COVID-19 while maintaining essential support is an ongoing sector priority.

Consistent with groups identified in phases [1b and 2a of the Australian Government's national vaccine rollout strategy](#), the resources sector has identified sub-groups within its own workforce that could be prioritised to maximise the effectiveness of the vaccination rollout by enhancing the protection of priority populations and communities. These include:

- Members of the workforce (not already prioritised in the government rollout schedule) at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and contractors, people aged over 50 and immune-compromised members. This may include specialists travelling to sites in remote areas
- Site-based medical or paramedical emergency services professionals
- Workers who are in contact with priority populations and communities and who are also required to undertake domestic or international travel, including those engaged on fly-in, fly-out arrangements
- Workers supporting essential services delivery, such as workers maintaining electricity, water and other essential services, including those with statutory roles
- Essential safety workers required for safe site operations and the ongoing ability to operate.

Appendix 1 outlines the various roles which may need to be prioritised.

APPENDIX 1

Various roles which may need to be prioritised

- COVID-19 related health roles (health testing, management, mental health, transport specialists)
- Safety and health practitioners that ensure worker and community safety alongside the whole supply chain from mine to port, including normal health-related activities and emergency response teams
- Hospitality and cleaning contractors at facilities
- Specialist contractors that move between sites (for example well blowout specialists)
- Marine pilots, tug operators, inspectors, harbour masters and waterfront workers exposed to foreign vessels
- FIFO workers who are in regular travel/contact with a large range of people and moving between transport hubs
- Statutory roles required by State and Territory mine safety legislation.

No list can be exhaustive given the complexity of operations. There will also be some roles across production, asset protection, infrastructure and construction where a risk assessment determines that the role has a high risk of infection transmission.