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# Re-opening the International Border – Advice to Industry 1 November 2021

## The Australian Government is reducing restrictions on airlines carrying vaccinated Australians

### From 1 November 2021 new arrangements apply

From 00:01 AEST on 1 November 2021, subject to the requirements of the relevant state or territory of arrival, 'fully vaccinated' Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family members can arrive in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory without being included in international passenger caps which remain in place for other jurisdictions.

From 00:01 AEST on 1 November 2021, 'fully vaccinated' Australian citizens and permanent residents can depart Australia without requiring an outwards travel exemption.

These provisions also apply to Australian citizens and permanent residents who:

- are under the age of 12 at the time of departure (whether vaccinated or not), or
- cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons (with approved evidence and subject to state and territory requirements).

Also, from 1 November 2021, the definition of 'immediate family member' will include the parents of adult Australian citizens and permanent residents. This is for the purpose of assessing exemptions to Australia's travel restrictions only. This includes:

- biological parents
- legal (including adoptive) parents
- step-parents
- parents in-law.

Before a parent or an immediate family member who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident can travel to Australia, they will need to have their relationship confirmed by submitting a travel exemption request through the Department of Home Affairs' [Travel Exemption Portal](#). Airlines are not required to confirm the family relationship. Airlines confirm a passenger's travel exemption status by contacting the Australian Border Operations Centre.

Passengers may be treated as 'fully vaccinated' if they meet the criteria outlined in this document.

All inbound Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family members who do not meet the criteria or exemptions set out in this advice will be included in airline passenger caps. They will also be subject to Australia's existing travel restrictions as well as state or territory quarantine requirements of the jurisdiction where they arrive into Australia.

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Outbound Australian citizens and permanent residents who do not meet these criteria are required to apply for an outwards travel exemption to leave Australia.

## Australia Travel Declaration

From 1 November 2021, incoming passengers will be required to provide certain health information under Australian law and those seeking to travel under quarantine free arrangements must provide a legally binding attestation regarding their health status. This should be provided using the Australia Travel Declaration (ATD).

Passengers should be encouraged to complete the ATD where ever possible and airlines are asked to check an ATD has been completed prior to uplift. If a passenger is unable to complete the ATD the airline should request the passenger completes a manual (paper) declaration. Passengers should retain the completed manual declaration and provide to a relevant authority on arrival.

## Travel will not be restricted to or from specific countries

The Australian Government is not restricting which countries a 'fully vaccinated' traveller can travel to or from. The Australian Government will continue to advise travellers of country specific risks through Smartraveller at smartraveller.gov.au. Each traveller will need to be aware of the specific entry requirements for the country they are travelling to.

## Evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test for inbound passengers

Evidence of a negative COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test taken within 3 days prior to scheduled departure is required for inbound travel to Australia (the first flight if there are one or more connecting flights booked for travel to Australia), unless an exemption applies.

- If the flight is delayed, the passenger meets the pre-departure testing requirements. They do not need a new test.
- If the flight has been re-scheduled or cancelled, the passenger will need to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test result taken within 3 days of the re-scheduled or newly booked flight.
- From 1 November 2021, exemption from the PCR testing requirement for people who are on incoming international flights from safe travel zone countries has been removed.
- More information about updated pre-departure PCR test requirements, including: the evidence required for medical exemptions; and what to do when travellers present a positive result but have recovered from COVID-19, is available on the Department of Health website.

At this stage Australia does not impose a requirement for a pre-departure COVID-19 test for outbound international travel. Destination countries may have testing requirements which require compliance for entry.

## 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. 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<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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 Australian Travel Declaration (ATD)) that their certificate is true and that they are fully vaccinated.

## What 'fully vaccinated' means

Australia considers you to be fully vaccinated if you have completed a course, including a mixed dose, of a Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved or recognised vaccine. 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
  - Sinovac Coronavac
  - Bharat Covaxin
  - Sinopharm BBIBP-CorV (for 18–60 year olds)
- 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.

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

## Unable to be vaccinated

Australian citizens or residents 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.

Australian citizens and permanent residents departing Australia who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons should present their Australian COVID-19 digital certificate or immunisation history statement to prove their contraindication (these may indicate a 'valid to' date).

Australian citizens or permanent residents 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. From 1 November 2021, Australian citizens or permanent residents travelling to Australia who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons will be allowed to travel above passenger caps in to New South Wales and Victoria, but travellers should be aware that they are unlikely to be able to travel onward to other jurisdictions

For travellers who provide 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 include the following information:

- their name (this must match their travel identification documents)
- date of medical consultation and details of their medical practitioner
- details that clearly acknowledge 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 vaccinated for the purposes of their travel.

## **Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated Australian children aged 12-17**

From 1 November, unvaccinated or partially vaccinated Australian children aged 12-17 years old entering Australia through New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory will be 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.

### **When is a child considered unvaccinated or partially vaccinated?**

Australian children who arrive into Australia will be considered as unvaccinated if they are:

- aged 12-17 years inclusive and have not received any COVID-19 vaccination
- aged 12-17 years inclusive and have only been partially vaccinated with a recognised COVID-19 vaccine
- aged 12-17 years inclusive and have been partially or fully vaccinated with a non-recognised COVID-19 vaccine.

## **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:
  - o the passenger's name as it appears in the passport
  - o either the passenger's date of birth or passport number
  - o the vaccine brand name; and
  - o either the date of each dose or the date on which the passenger completed a full course of immunisation.

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 outbound Australians vaccinated in Australia**

Where possible airlines should authenticate the passenger's ICVC at or before airport check-in on departure. For each passenger an airline agent should ensure:

- Australian citizens and permanent residents vaccinated in Australia are to use the ICVC as evidence of their vaccination status
- the passenger presents their passport and ICVC QR code, either digitally or in paper form

- if the passenger does not hold an ICVC, they should be encouraged to obtain one per the advice on the [Services Australia website](#) – this should only take minutes.
- the QR code is scanned using the free DFAT VDS-NC Checker app or an industry equivalent app to confirm it is authentic; and
- the vaccination information in the ICVC equates to ‘fully vaccinated’ and that name and date of birth or passport number align with the passport presented by the passenger.

Anyone fully or partly vaccinated in Australia is eligible for an ICVC. Some ICVC holders will therefore not be fully vaccinated. Airline agents need to verify that the vaccination history within the ICVC confirms the holder as ‘fully vaccinated’.

## Verifying outbound Australians vaccinated offshore

Australians who were vaccinated overseas may, on departing Australia, present foreign vaccination certificates rather than ICVCs. The criteria for fully vaccinated remain the same.

- The airline agent must verify the passenger’s foreign vaccination certificate at or before airport check-in on departure.

## Verifying returning Australians vaccinated in Australia

For returning Australians who have been vaccinated in Australia, the airline agent must ensure the same criteria for outbound travel are met, and that for each passenger:

- an ATD has been completed
  - where evidence of a completed ATD cannot be produced at check-in the airline should request the passenger completes an ATD at that time
  - where an ATD cannot be completed, 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; and
- the passenger provides evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 3 days of scheduled departure or an exemption consistent with advice from the [Department of Health website](#).

***Please note that passengers who have completed an ATD do not need to provide a manual declaration.***

## Verifying Australians vaccinated offshore travelling or returning to Australia

Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate families vaccinated offshore will generally not have an ICVC and must instead provide the airline with a foreign vaccination certificate. An airline agent at or before airport check-in on departure will need to ensure for each passenger:

- that an ATD has been completed
  - where evidence of a completed ATD cannot be produced at check-in the airline should request the passenger completes and ATD at that time
  - where an ATD cannot be completed, 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 foreign vaccination certificate
- the foreign vaccination certificate is an acceptable format and meets the definition of ‘fully vaccinated’; and

- the passenger provides evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 3 days of scheduled departure. Otherwise uplift should be denied, unless an exemption applies.

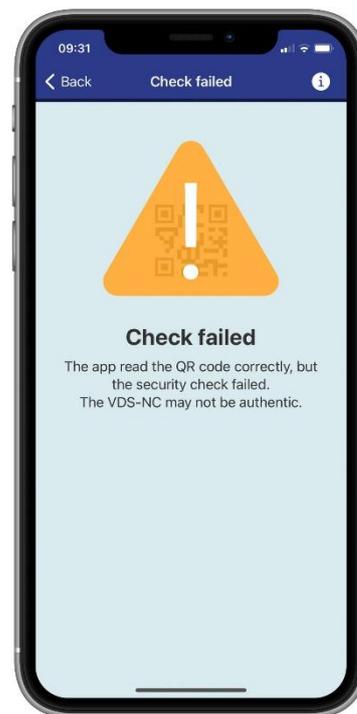
**Please note that passengers who have completed an ATD do not need to also provide a manual declaration.**

## 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

From 1 November 2021, there will be 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.

## Fully vaccinated temporary visa holders with a travel exemption

Fully vaccinated foreign nationals with an approved visa and travel exemption, and who are not required to quarantine on arrival, are allowed to fly to Australia above the international passenger arrival caps if they are flying into New South Wales or Victoria from 1 November 2021

## 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](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/covidvaccineproof).

Technical information on the security of the ICVC and eligibility to obtain one is available from [passports.gov.au](https://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](https://health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines).

## Glossary

<p>Immediate family member</p>	<p>An immediate family member is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a spouse</li> <li>- a de facto partner</li> <li>- a dependent child</li> <li>- a legal guardian</li> <li>- a parent.</li> </ul>
<p>Parent</p>	<p>From 1 November 2021, the definition of 'immediate family member' will include the parents of adult Australian citizens and permanent residents. This is for the purpose of assessing exemptions to Australia's travel restrictions only. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- biological parents</li> <li>- legal (including adoptive) parents</li> <li>- step-parents</li> <li>- parents in-law.</li> </ul> <p>Before a parent can travel to Australia, they will need to have their relationship with their adult Australian child confirmed by submitting a travel exemption request through the Department of Home Affairs Travel Exemption Portal.</p> <p>Airlines can confirm a traveller's travel exemption status by contacting the Australian Border Operations Centre.</p>
<p>Australian Citizen</p>	<p>A person could be an Australian citizen by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- birth, OR</li> <li>- descent, OR</li> <li>- acquisition (naturalisation), OR</li> <li>- adoption.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law">guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law</a></p>
<p>Australian Permanent Resident</p>	<p>A person who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the holder of a permanent resident visa</li> </ul>