



Dominic Perrottet
Premier of New South Wales

Paul Toole
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW

Stuart Ayres
Minister for Jobs, Investment,
Tourism and Western Sydney

Brad Hazzard
Minister for Health and Medical
Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW MOVES TO NEXT STAGE OF REOPENING AS BOOSTER PROGRAM RAMPS UP

The NSW Government is urging people to book in for their COVID-19 booster shot with restrictions easing today as part of the reopening roadmap.

The new settings that come into effect today include:

- Density limits will cease and masks will only be required on public transport and planes, at airports, and for indoors front-of-house hospitality staff who are not fully vaccinated. Masks are strongly recommended in settings where you cannot social distance;
- QR check-ins will only be required at high-risk venues including hospitals, aged and disability care facilities, gyms, places of worship, funerals or memorial services, business premises for personal services (e.g. hairdressers, salons and spas), pubs, small bars, registered clubs, nightclubs, and for indoor music festivals with more than 1,000 people;
- Proof of vaccination only required for indoor music festivals with more than 1,000 people and cruises with more than 100 passengers;
- Businesses can still require proof of vaccination at their own discretion;
- COVID safety plans will be optional for businesses and will be supported by SafeWork NSW.

More than 93 per cent of people aged 16 and over have been fully vaccinated as NSW continues its responsible and measured approach to reopening.

To maintain increased levels of immunity across the population the Commonwealth Government and NSW Government are continuing to roll out a booster vaccination program. Boosters are currently available for people aged 18 years and older who received their second dose at least five months ago.

Booster eligibility will increase steadily in 2022, with around 40 per cent of the NSW population to be eligible at the end of January, 64 per cent in February, 87 per cent in March, and 91 per cent by April 2022.

Premier Dominic Perrottet said with the removal of additional restrictions it was vital people booked in for their booster shot so we can continue to reopen safely.

“As we reopen in a measured and safe way people need to keep rolling up their sleeves to get their first and second jabs and their booster shots,” Mr Perrottet said.

“We have some of the highest vaccination rates in the world but there will continue to be challenges thrown at us and everyone must follow the rules to help combat new variants and keep people out of hospital.”

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Paul Toole said the NSW Government was sticking to the roadmap to give people certainty ahead of summer.

“Our Government will always take COVID seriously to ensure our regions remain open and safe,” Mr Toole said.

“With vaccination rates so high and visitors eager to get out and about, we urge people to follow the health advice to ensure they can hit the road enjoy the best regional NSW has to offer as safely as possible.”

Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism Stuart Ayres said with restrictions being relaxed businesses would continue to welcome people back safely.

“It has been a tough two years for business but we are learning to live and work in a COVID-safe way and it’s important we follow the rules for everyone’s safety,” Mr Ayres said.

“Cafes, restaurants, retail, tourism will be able to welcome more people back as we head into summer but it is vital people go out and get the boosters to keep themselves and others safe and businesses open.”

Health Minister Brad Hazzard encouraged everyone to book in for their booster as soon as they are eligible.

“Check your eligibility, get online, make the booking and you will be doing your bit to keep you, your family and the community safe,” Mr Hazzard said.

For more on the roadmap changes for December 15 visit: www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/easing-covid-19-restrictions/opening-in-dec.

Increased penalties for non-compliance with the isolation, testing and quarantine requirements remain, with individuals facing fines up to \$5,000 and \$10,000 for corporations.

Fully vaccinated close contacts will only have to isolate until they receive a negative PCR result. However, household close contacts and close contacts in any other settings identified by NSW Health will still be required to isolate for seven days and comply with PCR testing requirements.

The Commonwealth Government recently announced the vaccination program has been extended to all children aged 5 to 11 years from 10 January 2022 following updated advice from Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).