



*Better Leaders,
Better Collegiate Life*

COVID-19 vaccination policies specific to colleges - report

With experience in NSW & Victoria indicating that the only path out of the current outbreak is vaccination, Members met on Tuesday 28 September to discuss COVID vaccination policies specific to colleges.

Vaccinations across the colleges

Do we wait for the universities to make a decision regarding mandating vaccinations? Attention was drawn University of Melbourne's [communication](#) making vaccinations a requirement for attending their campuses from 5 November, 2021.

Qld, WA and SA are relatively COVID free, for many the current discussion is about encouraging rather than mandating vaccinations.

- Vaccine hesitancy has dropped and the level of unvaccinated may be so low that 'mandating' it may not be necessary for their college.
- International students will be required to have their COVID vaccination when we open up.
- Getting vaccinations is important to students as it is viewed as their passport back into clubs, pubs etc.
- Students want to be vaccinated, however, there is a hesitancy amongst some staff. What to do if a staff member does not want to be vaccinated? This will be tested in the context of the situation.

In NSW, some colleges have already mandated vaccination. Bill Peirson advised:

"While the community consultation was underway, we had a strong program of encouraging resident students and staff to obtain vaccination from the UNSW Health Service.

Within the community, there has been strong internal support for vaccination as student leaders have sought to recover the vibrancy of college life. From next-of-kin, there was overwhelming support (>93% of >45 extensive responses received) for mandatory vaccination within the communities.

The small number of residents who do not wish to be vaccinated now live in one wing of the Postgraduate college. In the remainder of the community, for staff and trusted contractors, we are now approaching full vaccination.

Vaccination has been mandated for all applicants for New College and New College Postgraduate Village for 2022 and beyond."

For others, vaccination is mandated for 2022. The Plan for 2021 is in line with government regulations but there is a push factor as students need to be vaccinated to attend formal dinners and general college life.

Vaccination Proof & Implications

For those NSW colleges who have mandated vaccination, questions of enforcing the policy and addressing non-compliance were discussed. Some colleges have a register of who has been vaccinated. Some see vaccination certificates as sensitive documents, instead they have an email of endorsement from the Dean stating that they are permitted to do x. This protects privacy surrounding medical history. Some are collecting surveys regarding vaccination status and whether they have received one of two doses plus dates of vaccinations. This will be particularly useful information in the event of an outbreak.

Other considerations -

- Colleges are porous environments and it is hard to keep guests out or ensure that they are vaccinated.
- How do we ensure contractors and visitors are vaccinated and how do we do this in a reasonable and practical way?

Responding to COVID-19 in Colleges/Halls & living with it

In summary, it was noted that we are going to have to live with COVID and it is about risk minimisation. One Head who had recently experienced 4 cases in their college advised:

- Trust and be confident with the protocols you have.
- Every floor in their block was a household and whilst there were some leaks in the household, it essentially worked to contain the virus.
- NSW Health were helpful. Positive cases went to one hotel quarantine. Close contacts went to a different hotel quarantine. The rest of the college were deemed as casual contacts and addressed accordingly.
- The government fully organised and paid for the hotel quarantine.
- Hire a public relations company. Stressed the importance of effective and good communication. Sending out multiple updates to residents, families, university, neighbours, board members etc. There were 5 updates in one week.
- There was high anxiety and students wanted to go home. Interestingly, a similar amount of students wanted to return to campus.
- Overall, the situation led to a higher motivation on people's part to be vaccinated, and adapt to this new environment.

In closing, some Members found the Aon webinar useful in assessing COVID-19 & Business Risk for their Councils. For those who missed the webinar, **The new workplace challenge: Ethics, law and the COVID-19 vaccination**, see below:

Presentation:

<https://aoninsights.com.au/new-workplace-challenge-ethics-law-and-the-covid-19-vaccination/>

Presentation slides:

<http://aoninsights.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Aon-COVID-19-Vaccination-webinar-FINAL.pdf>

- Vaccinations and the Law
- Assessment of COVID contraction & Business Risk (Slide 16)
- SPC experience incl. timetable for adopting mandatory vaccination policy
- Vaccinations and Workers' Compensation
- Insurance Implications