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The Courier

Information and Advice for NSW Transport Operators

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***For information, advice and support on any issue related to COVID-19, please contact Hugh McMaster, ARTIO NSW Secretary/Treasurer, email: hughmc@artionsw.com.au; telephone: 0412 880861
24/7 NSW Government COVID-19 hotline, 13 77 88
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COVID-19: Flu Vaccination More Important in 2020 says Health Minister

Adapted from media release, Minister for Health, The Hon Greg Hunt MP, 1 April 2020

The Commonwealth Health Minister, Greg Hunt says all Australians, especially those in vulnerable groups or age brackets, should arrange vaccination against seasonal influenza during April.

Expert medical advice is that everyone aged six months and over should be vaccinated against influenza this year to protect themselves and others in the community.

Availability

Mr Hunt said over 13.5 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccines have been secured for the National Immunisation Program and the private market in 2020.

Influenza vaccines are also available through state and territory programs, and through private providers including GPs and community pharmacy.

Mandatory Vaccination for Aged Care Workers and Visitors

Mr Hunt said that from 1 May 2020, all aged care workers and visitors must have been vaccinated against seasonal influenza to enter an aged care facility.

Influenza Vaccination and COVID-19

Mr Hunt said that due to the COVID-19 outbreak, there are strong national requirements for all Australians to stay home unless they are undertaking essential activities.

He said:

- People in mandatory self-isolation due to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 should remain in isolation and should not leave their home to go and get a flu vaccination.
- People who do not have COVID-19, or who are not a suspected case of COVID-19, are allowed to leave their home for a flu vaccination, but it is recommended they should only do so if they have phoned ahead, made sure their health care professional has vaccine available, and made an appointment with their healthcare professional.

The Best Time to Get a Flu Shot and Why it is More Important to do so this Year

Mr Hunt said receiving a vaccination from April provides optimal protection in the peak period of influenza circulation, usually from June to September in most parts of Australia.

He said this year it is even more important to be vigilant about the flu because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While there is not yet a vaccine or effective treatment for COVID-19, vaccination provides an effective defence against the flu.

Vaccinating against the flu will reduce the risk of a very dangerous double-up of flu and coronavirus as both diseases affect the respiratory system.

Vaccinated people of all ages are less likely to get the flu and if they do, are less likely to have a severe case.

Fewer cases and fewer severe cases of flu will result in less demand on our health care system.

Most cases of COVID-19 in Australia so far have been mild, however this could change if people already made vulnerable by the flu also contract COVID-19.

COVID-19: Child Care to be Free from 6 April

Adapted from joint media release, The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister and The Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education

The Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and the Education Minister, Dan Tehan, have jointly announced details of free child care to apply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Federal Government will pay 50 per cent of the child care sector's fee revenue up to the existing hourly rate cap based on a point in time before parents started withdrawing their children in large numbers, but only so long as services remain open and do not charge families for care.

The funding will apply from 6 April based on the number of children who were in care during the fortnight leading into 2 March, whether or not they are attending services.

The plan provides funding certainty to early childhood education and care services at a time where enrolments and attendance are highly unpredictable.

Priority will be given to working parents, vulnerable and disadvantaged children that need early education more than ever and parents with pre-existing enrolments.

The system will be reviewed after one month, with an extension to be considered after three months.

The payments will be paid in lieu of existing subsidy payments.

Further information is available from www.dese.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19.

COVID-19: WA Government Further Tightens Border Controls: Freight Remains Exempt

Adapted from media release, Mark McGowan, Premier of WA, 2 April 2020

The WA Premier, Mark McGowan, has announced that WA will be closed from the rest of the country from 11.59pm on Sunday, 5 April to safeguard Western Australians from COVID-19

He said that regional boundaries and tough measures have already been introduced to restrict movement and social interaction in WA.

Mr McGowan said exemptions are currently being finalised.

However, he confirmed the exemption currently in place for “transport, freight and logistics” will remain in place.

"I want the message to be absolutely clear to any Western Australian over east who is thinking of coming to WA. If you need to get home to WA - come home now," Mr McGowan said.