



SitRep 32/2021

COVID Update #2

The COVID Pandemic is once again escalating, with further increases in cases and exposed locations now extending outside of the four local government areas and most recently the announcement that as of 18:00 today, people in Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong will be allowed to leave their homes for only four reasons. As the escalation in this health crisis continues, the Union is calling on the Department to provide greater clarity, instruction and protection for our members, their families and the people of NSW.

We are writing to the COVID IMT to seek clarification and request greater restrictions.

The Union will;

- Seek clarification on Travel Restrictions for Interstate Travellers and request that the Department seek Travel Exemption and 14-Day Quarantine Exemption from NSW Health and its counterpart in the other states and territories.
 - The Public Health Order already facilitates that;
The Minister may, in writing and subject to the conditions the Minister considers appropriate, grant an exemption to this Order or specified provisions of this Order.
- Request the Department, through the COVID IMT, issue an instruction to ensure compliance with the Public Health Order and to mitigate our members and their families from unnecessary exposure by stating that, in order of priority;
 - Communication Centres in Newcastle and Alexandria become locked down and no relieving in and out of these centres is to be performed.
 - Members based at a station located within areas defined under the Stay at Home Order, should continue to perform duties at these locations only.
 - Members who have worked at a station located within areas defined under the Stay at Home Order in the 14 days prior to the public health order, should continue to perform duties at these locations only.
 - If a member is based at a station located within areas defined under the Stay at Home Order, but has not worked in one of these areas in the 14 days prior to the public health order, then they should report to their nearest station, outside this area, for duty.
 - If a member resides within areas defined under the Stay At Home Order, but is based at a station outside these areas, then they should report to their nearest station, inside this area, for duty.
 - If a member is unable to safely perform any of the above, then they should be provided with alternative work arrangements.
 - Special Paid Leave to be paid to members affected by the Public Health Orders, irrespective of your residential location.
 - Access to excessive Annual Leave.



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Interstate Travellers

Any member affected by cross border travel restrictions should, as per the COVID Toolkit, with compelling circumstances and wishing to seek alternative working arrangements:

- Contact your Zone Command in the first instance to discuss options.
- If you require assistance with sourcing accommodation in the local area of your station, discuss options with your Zone Command.
- If you need to escalate any concerns or issues after consulting your line manager, contact Operational Staffing.

Pandemic Restriction Levels

The Departments Pandemic Restriction Levels policy states that "FRNSW's primary concern is the health and safety of our workforce" and the Union would request that this commitment be demonstrated in its acceptance of the Union's requests and that under this same policy, all stations within the Stay at Home Order LGA's be increased to "Level 4 – Confine" restrictions. This Level 4 restriction should also apply to subsequent stations should the LGA's under the Stay at Home Order be expanded by NSW Health.

While Level 4 imposes a "limitation of movements of staff across the organisation", it is done by zones which doesn't minimise the potential exposure to stations in the designated zones and as such the Unions proposal as set out above should be considered an additional layer to Level 4.

The Virus is Winning

The people of Sydney have been warned for weeks that the virus was getting out of control, and here we are now as a collective Union trying to resolve these issues and seek clarification. This is a fluid and dynamic situation and your State Committee is working through this to address members concerns. If any member is unsure of how this affects them, they are to call the office during business hours or their Sub-Branch Secretary after hours.

Efforts to contact the Department and the COVID IMT have yielded little, if any, response. As such, this SitRep requires a written response from the Department by 18:30 today to address the issues. Failure to respond to the requests and clarification and an increase to Level 4 Restrictions with the amendments as stated, will result in a CODE RED being issued.

Remember that your health and the health of your family is the most important part of this. If you feel unwell, then please stay at home, and follow health guidelines around getting tested. If you are in doubt and do not want to attend work then you consider accessing your leave as required.

In Unity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Shane Kennedy".

Shane Kennedy
State Secretary