INQUIRY INTO COVID-19 CLASSIFICATION OF THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Organisation: NSW Department of Parliamentary Services

Date Received: 17 November 2022

DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES
Office of the Chief Executive

Portfolio Committee No. 2 - Health
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Committee members,

On 1 November 2022, the Committee Secretariat wrote inviting me to make a submission into your inquiry into the COVID -19 classification of the Minister for Health, in particular with respect to part (b) of the Terms of Reference:

b) the relevant COVID testing and isolation laws, regulations and protocols in force at the time of the event (22 and 23 June 2021).

On the 22nd and 23rd June 2021 the NSW Health orders in effect included *Public Health (COVID-19 Greater Sydney) Order (No 2) 2021* and *Public Health (COVID-19 Mandatory Face Coverings) Order (No 2).* A definitive list of the exact orders and amendments in place at that time should be sought from NSW Health.

On the 22nd and 23rd June 2021, the *Parliament of NSW Pandemic Plan* (**Attachment A**) was in effect. Other relevant protocols in place include:

- The *Parliament of NSW Operational Guidelines for Parliamentary Precinct Safe Working During COVID-19* (**Attachment B**)
- The *COVID-19 Safety Plan (Conference and Functions Venues)* (**Attachment C**)
- A COVID-19 update sent on 23rd June 2021 summarising the new arrangements in place (**Attachment D**)

On 24 June, NSW Health contacted Parliament of NSW to request that they be able to view video from our CCTV cameras for the purposes of contract tracing. Officers from NSW Health attended Parliament House to view the footage, under the supervision of the Senior Manager, Security. No footage was removed from the premises. Consistent with the relevant internal policy the video was not kept beyond the prescribed 14 day period.

Mark Webb
Chief Executive
NSW Department of Parliamentary Services
Parliament of NSW

Parliament of NSW Pandemic Plan

June 2020

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1.0   Introduction

Business continuity is a proactive plan to avoid and mitigate risks associated with a disruption of operations. It details the steps to be taken before, during and after an event to maintain the operational viability of an organization. This is significant in an organisation such as the NSW Parliament which has a duty to the people of NSW to continue to operate to an effective standard and ensure that services to the community are maintained.

The NSW Parliament's Pandemic Plan (the Plan) is part of the Parliament-wide Business Continuity Program (BCP) which prepares the Parliament in the event of critical incidents including pandemics.

1.1   Background

Pandemics are epidemics of infectious disease that occur on a world-wide scale. A pandemic occurs when a new virus emerges that:

- is markedly different from recently circulating seasonal viruses;
- can infect people and cause disease (rather than, or in addition to, other mammals or birds);
- can spread readily from person to person; and
- can spread widely because most people will have little or no immunity.

Pandemics can be highly variable in their impact, depending on how sick the virus makes people (morbidity and mortality) and the ability of the virus to spread between people (transmissibility). Further information on pandemics can be found on the World Health Organisation (WHO) website.

Over the past two decades pandemics such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) have seriously impacted global economies. Most recently, the COVID-19 virus has devastated business activity across the world. Prudent business practice is to initiate planning to prepare for and mitigate against the risk of potential disruption caused by such pandemics. The Parliament of NSW Pandemic Plan is one component of the overall business continuity planning initiated by the Parliament.

1.2   Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to outline strategic actions, administrative processes and governance arrangements to mitigate against the rate of spread of the virus and possible business disruption caused by a pandemic.

The Plan ensures that the Parliaments resources are used in the most efficient manner possible and also provides an agreed communication strategy ensuring timely and accurate information is disseminated to staff.

This plan is to be read in conjunction with the following operational guidelines as amended from time to time:
- *Operational Guidelines for Parliamentary Precinct - Safe working during Covid-19* (which includes the
  Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council COVID Safe Proceedings Guidelines
- *Operational Guidelines for Electorate Office Safe Working during COVID-19*

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- *Operational Guidelines for safely working from home during COVID-19*

1.3   This Plan

This Plan is set out in 3 parts.

- Part 1 provides an introduction to the Planning process and describes the purpose of the Plan.
- Part 2 outlines the Planning Framework and the interconnectedness of various plans, information products and agencies involved in managing activities associated with a pandemic. This section also clarifies the scope of application of this plan.
- Part 3 is the machinery of the Plan. It describes the strategic actions to be taken and the business units responsible for putting in place relevant measures at identified phases of preparing for and responding to the pandemic. This part also describes the administrative and governance arrangements to support revised business arrangements.

The Plan has two attachments. Attachment A is the Australian Government's National Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic. Attachment B lists the processes to be applied for grievance procedures.

2.1   The Planning Framework

The Parliament's Pandemic Plan (the Plan) is based on the NSW Health Influenza Pandemic Plan which outlines the strategic intent, responsibilities, authorities and mechanisms to prepare, prevent, respond to and recover from a pandemic within NSW. The NSW Health IPP complements the National Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic and the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza.

The primary NSW Government website which will host pandemic information and link to other appropriate agency websites is www.health.nsw.gov.au. The link to NSW COVID-19 information is www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19. The Australian Government website is the Department of Health which provides a link to specific Corona Virus (COVID-19) information – **this page provides the official pandemic status.**

This Plan is supported by the Parliament's Pandemic Operational Guidelines as updated from time to time. The current Operational Guidelines are contained on the Parliament's WHS Intranet page under this Plan. The operational guidelines are based on Health advice (see links above), as well as information from Safe Work Australia's industry specific COVID-19 guidance.

The **Business Continuity Planning Policy (BCP)** provides the framework required for Parliament to continue to deliver key functions and activities in the event of a disaster or critical incident that severely disrupts business operations. The BCP policy is supported by the Business Continuity Management Program (BCMP) which informs how business continuity is achieved with the establishment of business continuity team structure, roles and responsibilities. The BCMP contains a suite of 4 interrelated plan documents as follows:

1. **Business Interruption Response Plan** outlines the Parliament's initial response to a disruptive event in the first phase of managing a Business Interruption Event.

2. **Business Resumption Plans** facilitate the recovery of Parliament's critical processes.

3. **Disaster Recovery Plan** facilitates the recovery of critical Information Technology systems supporting the Parliament's critical processes.

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4. **Pandemic Plan** which outlines governance arrangements, processes and mitigating strategies to be activated in the event that a pandemic is declared by the NSW Health.

The plans will be invoked according to prevailing circumstances, noting that elements of each plan interact and overlap with other plans. By way of example, a pandemic outbreak is likely to affect the Business Interruption Response Plan and Business Recovery Plans in relation to the following occurring:

- impact on work premises (due to potential contamination);
- impact on Members and staff (including high absenteeism, perhaps around 30 - 50%);
- loss of functional information communication and technology systems if specialist personnel are absent; any interruptions to other third party suppliers who provide goods and services to the Parliament.

2.2   Scope

This Pandemic Plan applies to all departments, branches/business units in the Parliament. It defines the responses and procedures to be applied by the Crisis Management Team (CMT) across the entire Parliament, including the guidance and assistance to be provided to Members in relation to their Electorate Offices and staff.

On a larger scale, essential services, utilities and society as a whole are likely to be impacted by the virus. Examples may include limited public transport, affected water and electricity supplies, and the closure of schools. Mobilisation of the Pandemic Plan for the Parliament needs to be cognizant of the broader societal impact of the pandemic.

2.3   Working Together

State Agreement with Unions NSW

To ensure the continuity of government services during a pandemic, the NSW Government has a Memorandum of Understanding with Unions NSW. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 19 October 2007 and sets out the conditions which will apply during a pandemic including attendance, salary payments, the ability to require staff to provide wider support by undertaking additional duties that are not in the employee's role description and approaches to take if the NSW Ministry of Health closes a workplace.

The Memorandum of Understanding also provides for a Pandemic Special Leave capped at 20 days. This leave may be granted for personal illness, caring for sick family members or due to transport or other major disruptions.

All NSW Public Sector Awards (and supporting Memorandums of Understanding), determinations, industrial instruments and related policies that are currently in operation in NSW are affected by the Memorandum of Understanding.

Please note that the original Memorandum of Understanding is currently impacted by the application of Circular C2020-01 Employment Arrangements during COVID-19 (Department of Premier and Cabinet).

WHS Consultation within Parliament

The Parliament's regular consultative methods for Work Health and Safety, namely the Parliament Work Health and Safety Committee, the Joint Consultative Committee with the Public Service Association and

regular team meetings and toolbox talks, as well as other communications will be used for consultation with staff during a pandemic event.

3.0   The Plan

3.1   Strategic Actions

The table below (Table 1) outlines a range of strategic actions and procedures that may be required during the various phases of managing business activities in preparing for and responding to a pandemic. The procedures listed here are, if required, the minimum actions to be undertaken by identified business units to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the Parliaments' business. Table 1 describes what is to be done and by whom.

The CMT has overall responsibility for ensuring that Managers and Team Leaders complete identified actions. This Plan is based on the Australian Government's Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic. It identifies a strategic framework for dealing with the pandemic in a systematic and structured way by implementing specific actions in each of the following phases:

- Preparedness
- Response
- Standby
- Action (initial and targeted)
- Stand down

A copy of the National Action Plan framework is attached as Attachment A.

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Table 1: Strategic Actions Plan

Key actions by phase	Responsibility
Response Phase - Preparedness - *No novel strain detected (or emerging strain under initial investigation)*	
Develop and maintain Parliament Pandemic Plan detailing arrangements for managing a Pandemic incident. Liaise with stakeholders to ensure they are aware of Parliament's pandemic preparedness and expectations. Monitor the emergence of disease types with pandemic potential, and investigate any outbreaks	SMG Office of the CE Manager WRS
Develop and maintain appropriate policies and procedures to manage employees during a pandemic, including: • Employee leave, social distancing and travel, and • Working from home / alternative sites and redistribution of critical employees. Support government health recommendations on annual influenza vaccinations.	Human Services SMG approval of policies Public Sector IR (MoU)
Allocate remote access to all critical staff who need it.	IT Services
Procure personal protective equipment (PPE) and other key supplies.	Facilities

Response phase – Standby – *Sustained community person to person transmission overseas*	
Monitor ongoing virus development, government responses and official health alerts and brief SMG	Human Services
Commence assessing staffing requirements - look at what arrangements exist for staff to work from home, if necessary at a later date.	SMG
Consider the suitability of processes and requirements under this plan, make recommendations where appropriate, and coordinate update of BRP's for critical processes	Manager Governance & Risk and SMG

Procure extra supply of hand wash/sanitiser for toilets and kitchens on each floor	Facilities
Ensure posters displayed in common areas (lift wells, kitchen notice boards)	Human Services
Encourage staff with flu symptoms to stay home	Managers
Review staff access to the Employee Assistance Program	Human Services
Establish contacts with NSW Health and health providers	Human Services
Provide advice staff who are likely to travel with information on how to prevent them from getting ill (e.g. personal health information) and where they may seek medical advice if they feel ill	Human Services

Response Phase – Action (Initial) – *Cases detected in Australia - When information about the disease is scarce*	Responsibility
Activate this plan where formal advice from either NSW Health or the Department of Health (Federal) indicates the pandemic has moved to this phase – CMT activated	Human Services – Mgr WRS to advise PEG via CE
Monitor Government actions for special provisions and policy advice, identify the nature of the disease within New South Wales and provide regular updates to the CMT.	Human Services - CMT
Issue regular communications to employees and stakeholders including: • Information about the pandemic and Parliament's response, including the management strategy for Members and staff, new policies and FAQ's • Public health information, including instructing Members and staff not to enter the workplace if presenting with disease-related symptoms, and directing suspected cases to their local GP (or fever clinic if established), and • Personal health preventative measures including hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting guidelines	Human Services – CMT Human Services and Facilities - CMT
Develop and implement risk management strategies to minimise the threat and impact of the pandemic: • Develop a specific action plan based on specific advice from Health authorities, including a communications plan. • Maintain a register of employees that contract the disease, including contact details, health status, and whether they are business critical or non-critical employees. • Monitor the impact on absenteeism on critical business areas.	SMG, DPS Communications Human Services

- Discourage face to face meetings, group gatherings, use of public transport, external meetings and training. - Consider implementing social distancing measures and alternative work arrangements. - Consider restricting public access to Electorate Offices, including signage for alternate contact methods - Promote the use of telecommunications and video conferencing, working from home (especially for critical staff), flexible work arrangements and the use of facilities on a rostered basis. - Consider not passing on fees and charges for remote access tokens for periods of self isolation - Restrict non-essential staff travel to areas affected by the pandemic. - Consider health check arrangements at entrances to Parliament House. - Consider implementing personal hygiene preventative measures such as PPE if clinically indicated.	Manager and Directors to advise HS CMT to determine and communicate.
Response Phase – Action (Targeted) – *Cases detected in Australia - When enough is known about the virus to tailor measures to specific needs*	**Responsibility**
Develop and implement targeted risk mitigation strategies to minimise the threat and impact of the pandemic: Determine impact of absenteeism on critical business areas. Identify affected business-critical staff, and invoke individual BRP's where immediate threat has passed and it is appropriate to do so. Monitor government actions for revised policy advice. Review and update the specific pandemic action plan. Consider increasing social distancing measures and alternative work arrangements as required: - Further limit face to face meetings, group gatherings, external meetings and training - Restrict non-essential travel to areas affected by the pandemic - Promote home-based work options for business-critical staff in affected areas - Re-locate or send non-critical staff home - Consider implementing resource prioritisation such as allocate staff from non-critical areas to critical business areas with high absenteeism, and providing critical business areas with priority access to resources and facilities. Continue to provide regular updates to stakeholders.	Human Services via SMG CMT and relevant branch/business unit Directors Human Services CMT CMT

Provide counselling and support services for staff working remotely.	Human Services
Closure of Electorate Offices to the Public – and provide signage for alternate contact methods.	CMT with Individual Members
Establish health check stations at entrances to Parliament House	Facilities
Check that PPE supplies are up to date and distribute to relevant areas	Facilities
In affected areas, where possible, isolate air conditioning into discrete areas to avoid contamination and institute additional cleaning and disinfecting	Facilities
Response Phase – Stand Down – Threat can be managed within normal arrangements/monitoring for change is in place	**Responsibility**
Monitor triggers for return to normal operations from Government health advice, reduction in absenteeism or no new cases confirmed after 8 days. Activate (if not already) or finalise actions under branch/business unit Business Resumption plans Cease Pandemic activities that are no longer needed and begin transitioning back to the "Preparedness" stage, Maintain social distancing, alternative working arrangements and personal health preventative measures until the pandemic alert is completely over. Continue to monitor strategies that minimise exposure and reduce the risk of Members and staff becoming infected. Communicate to Members, staff and other stakeholders to support the return from pandemic to business as usual.	SMG
Stand down CMT and notify Presiding Officers of same. Consider finalising branch/business unit Business Resumption Plans.	All Directors
Evaluate Parliament's pandemic response and revise plans and procedures accordingly. Continue to monitor government advice. Notify insurers of any claims for business interruption.	SMG Chief Financial Officer

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3.2   Administrative Processes

3.2.1 Activation of the Pandemic Plan

The Parliamentary Executive Group (PEG) will activate this plan, which among other Business continuity responses initiates the Crisis Management Team in responding to the emerging situation.

The criteria to be applied in determining whether this Plan should be activated will be based on formal alert level announcements made by NSW Health.

As part of the pandemic response process, the CMT may also determine to activate individual Business Resumption Plans (BRP). The criteria to be applied in determining whether the BRP's should be activated are defined within those documents and are based on determining whether expected outages are likely to be greater than pre-defined maximum allowable outages for key business processes.

3.2.2 Manage Travel

In line with Circular C2020-02 (Department of Premier and Cabinet) all currently booked and approved international and domestic travel should be re-evaluated in line with the most up to date travel advice available at https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/

International and domestic travel should be restricted to essential travel only.

Any change to planned travel should be done in accordance Parliament's travel booking policies and processes.

3.2.3 Supporting our People

3.2.3.1   Attendance and Absence

This section applies to all staff, ie staff of the three Parliamentary departments as well as Members' staff (Electorate Officers and Secretary/Research Assistants).

Parliament, through its Business Interruption Response Plan and Business Resumption Plans, will operate as close to normal as possible at each stage of the pandemic, utilising staff and stakeholder protection measures as recommended by NSW Health.

Unless staff are on approved leave (e.g. sick, recreation, pandemic special leave or other), they are to remain working during a pandemic outbreak. Parliament will apply all NSW Health recommended measures for providing a safe workplace. Any employee who then chooses not to work (after the appropriate HR process has been followed) and is not on approved leave will be placed on leave without pay.

The Crisis Management Team may apply any or all of the following flexible working arrangements during a pandemic outbreak as outlined in Circular C2020-01 Employment Arrangements during COVID-19 (Department of Premier and Cabinet):

Where employees who are not directly involved in the pandemic response cannot be gainfully employed at their normal place of work or remotely from home, such employees,

where feasible and appropriate, may be temporarily required to work in another role within the Parliament.

3.2.3.2   Unable to work due to illness

If an employee is sick, current sick leave entitlements and conditions apply. Where sick leave is exhausted, Department heads may grant special sick leave on a case by case basis.

Staff are not required to provide a medical certificate when absent due to pandemic related sickness or to provide care for others, but will need to provide a copy of their record of attendance, or for the person for whom they are providing care, from a NSW Health Fever Clinic, or such other document(s) as required by the Crisis Management Team.

The Crisis Management Team should discourage staff from going to their General Practitioner, but instead to attend a NSW Health Fever Clinic (once established) where details of recent contacts will be recorded. Details of current advice for those with symptoms on who they should contact and how is available on the [Health Website](#).

3.2.2.3   Working flexibly

Parliament, in accordance with its business continuity plan, is to operate as close to normal as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak, taking account of any protection measures recommended by NSW Health.

Unless employees are on approved leave (e.g. sick, annual, family and community services, special) during the COVID-19 outbreak they are to undertake their normal duties either at their usual workplace, utilising flexible working arrangements at home, or at an alternate location.

Where employees are working from home whilst also providing care to a family member, it is expected employees can balance caring responsibilities with their ability to undertake productive work, or other leave provisions can apply.

3.2.3.4   Social Distancing

Where an employee is not sick but is directed not to attend the workplace due to isolation requirements, managers (including Members) should identify options for employees to work from home during the quarantine period. Where work is unable to be provided to these employees, they are to be paid as normal and are placed on paid special leave for up to 20 days.

3.2.3.5   Unable to work

Up to 20 days paid special leave will be provided, before other leave entitlements need to be accessed, to employees who are unable to work because they are:
- caring for sick family members (note same certificate requirements as outlined for staff who are personally sick – see above);
- caring for family members due to closure of schools and caring facilities; or
- unable to attend work due to transport disruptions.

After the 20 days of special leave has been used, employees may access accrued leave entitlements (sick, annual, family and community services, extended/long service leave).

3.2.3.6   Workplace is closed

Where the workplace (Parliament House, or individual Electorate Offices) is closed, flexible work arrangements should be considered either at home or from another office location. Where work is unable to be provided to these employees, they are to be paid as normal and are placed on paid special leave.

3.2.3.7   Employees who are Emergency Service Volunteers

In a major emergency, Parliamentary and Members' staff who are Emergency Service Volunteers will continue to have access to unlimited Special Leave on full pay (based on the provisions of Section 6-17.7.2 of the [Public Sector Industrial Relations Guide](#)).

3.2.3   Work Health & Safety

The Parliament has a duty to ensure the safety of its workers under the NSW *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. This duty applies in all work related situations including in a pandemic. Parliament will meet this obligation, by providing safe systems of work, information, instruction, training and supervision and a suitable working environment. For *s*pecific processes and procedures. Section 4.1 of this Plan provides additional detail on procedures to be applied during the pandemic..

Whenever appropriate, normal practice will apply with respect to the Parliament's Employee Assistance Program.

Where staff work from home, Parliament will provide appropriate guidance and instruction on principles to be observed while working at home. It is important that staff take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety while working from home.

3.2.4   Grievance Procedures

The Memorandum of Understanding with Unions NSW affects all NSW public sector awards, agreements and policies including those of the Parliament such as our Grievance Policy and Procedure. **Attachment B** details the grievance procedures which must be applied by the Crisis Management Team as derived from the Memorandum of Understanding.

3.3   Governance arrangements

3.3.1 Training

If specific training is required under this Policy, staff that are identified as having a role to play in the Business Interruption Response Plan and Business Recovery Plans processes will be trained in the relevant procedures required in a pandemic response.

3.3.2 Testing and Review

The BCP requires that the Pandemic Plan is tested periodically as required. Records of test plans and test results will be retained by the Manager Governance & Risk so as to provide an audit trail. Opportunities for improvement arising from tests will be applied to the Pandemic Plan as part of a continual improvement process.

3.3.3 Distribution

This Pandemic Plan will be distributed to each member of the Crisis Management Team and Senior Management Group and published on the Parliament's Intranet.

3.3.4 Post Incident Reporting

Following a pandemic, a post incident report should be documented at the first reasonable opportunity.

The post incident report will be used as an input to the continual improvement process to ensure that "lessons learnt" and opportunities for improvement identified during an actual incident or a test are noted and applied to the Pandemic Plan.

3.3.5 Related documents

- NSW Subplan – Human Influenza Pandemic
- Emergency Response Plan for Communicable Disease Incidents of National Significance: National Arrangements (National CD Plan) (replaces the existing National Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic)
- Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza
- Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus
- Parliament's Flexible Work Practices Policy

The Australian Government's National Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic identifies five pandemic phases, including two sub-phases of Action. The Parliament of NSW Influenza Pandemic Plan response actions are based on these phases.

Preparedness		• Establish pre-agreed arrangements by developing and maintaining plans; • research pandemic specific influenza management strategies; • ensure resources are available and ready for rapid response; • monitor the emergence of diseases with pandemic potential, and investigate outbreaks if they occur.
Response	Standby	• Prepare to commence enhanced arrangements; • identify and characterise the nature of the disease (commenced in Preparedness); and • communicate to raise awareness and confirm governance arrangements.
	Action	Action is divided into two groups of activities: Initial (when information about the disease is scarce) • prepare and support health system needs; • manage initial cases; • identify and characterise the nature of the disease within the Australian context; • provide information to support best practice health care and to empower the community and responders to manage their own risk of exposure; and • support effective governance. Targeted (when enough is known about the disease to tailor measures to specific needs.) • support and maintain quality care; • ensure a proportionate response; • communicate to engage, empower and build confidence in the community; and • provide a coordinated and consistent approach.
	Standdown	• Support and maintain quality care; • cease activities that are no longer needed, and transition activities to seasonal or interim arrangements; • monitor for a second wave of the outbreak; • monitor for the development of antiviral resistance; • communicate to support the return from pandemic to normal business services; and • evaluate systems and revise plans and procedures.

Attachment B: Grievance procedures

The following procedures must be applied by the Crisis Management Team in the event of a grievance as a result of a pandemic:

1. all grievances and disputes relating to the application of the Memorandum of Understanding will initially be dealt with by the Crisis Management Team.

2. a staff member, at any stage, may request to be represented by their union

3. the Crisis Management Team will consider the issue as soon as practicable and provide a response within 2 days of the matter being brought to attention

4. if the matter remains unresolved, the Chief Executive or his delegate will provide a written response to the staff member advising the reasons

5. where the matter cannot be resolved within the Parliament due to the critical impact of the pandemic, the matter may be referred to the Parliament's Joint Consultative Committee represented by Public Service Association, for resolution

6. if a grievance requires more significant intervention, it may be referred to the Public Sector's Joint Consultative Group with representatives from the Public Service Association, Unions NSW, and the Secretary, Public Sector Industrial Relations who will agree to be bound by any resolution

7. while the procedures outlined above are being followed, normal work undertaken prior to notification of the dispute or difficulty will continue unless otherwise agreed between the parties, or in the case involving Work Health and Safety, normal work will proceed in a manner which avoids any risk to the health and safety of any staff member or member of the public.

Parliament of NSW

Operational Guidelines for Parliamentary Precinct Safe working during COVID-19

Purpose

These Guidelines provide for the practical application of the Parliament of NSW Pandemic Plan during COVID-19, and draws on principles and guidance from NSW Health and Safe Work Australia – COVID-19 Information for Office Workplaces . This is a dynamic document to be updated regularly reflecting the current health advice and best workplace practice during this time of COVID-19.

Scope

The Guidelines outline the practical measures to be implemented in the Parliamentary Precinct following the activation of the Parliament's Pandemic Plan on 23 March 2020 in response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. The Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council COVID Safe Proceedings Guidelines (Annexures A and B respectively) as they relate to the specific operations of the Chambers when in session.

Related guidelines

- Operational Guidelines for Electorate Office Safe Working during COVID-19
- Operational Guidelines for Safely Working from Home during COVID-19
- Department of Premier and Cabinet Circular C2020-01 Employment Arrangements during COVID-19

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Guidelines

1. **Communications**

    1.1. COVID-19Intranet Page
    A specific Information page has been created on the Intranet and features a range of COVID-19 related information and resources, both internal and external.

    1.2. Factsheets and toolkits
    Factsheets and toolkits for specific arrangements are located on the COVID information page. The factsheets and toolkits are regularly updated as circumstances change.

    1.3. Email communications
    Regular communications are sent by the Chief Executive updating all Members and staff of new and changed arrangements – i.e. those in these guidelines. Electorate Offices (EO) are also sent regular and specific updates from the DPS WHS and EO Services teams about the safe operation of those offices. These email communications provide the most up-to-date health advice from both Federal and State Health officials, as well as any changes to measures being taken at the Parliament.

    1.4. Revised Newsletters
    Regular newsletters to departments and the wider parliamentary community are issued from Department Heads with key information and advice on managing issues as they relate to COVID-19.

2. **Travel to the Parliamentary Precinct**

    2.1. Being symptom free and otherwise well

    > **Anyone with symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat should NOT attend Parliament House at any time, and should seek medical advice and assistance.**

    2.2. Transport advice
    As of 14 December, the Public Health Order which provided that anemployer must allow an employee to work at the person's place of residence if it is reasonably practicable to do so will be repealed (abolished).Therefore, as more employees return to the office, the Parliament's 'Flexible Work Practices Policy' will apply to allow for flexible working arrangements such as remote working and staggered start and finish times and rostering purposes. NSW Health strongly encourage all persons using public transport to wear a mask. Employees must discuss and agree with their manager any flexible working arrangements.

    2.2.1. Private transport
    External Paid parking (significantly cheaper pre-booked online) is available nearby the Parliamentary Precinct for those who do not have annual parking within the building. Free parking for motorcycles, scooters and bicycles is available on Level 2 of the Parliament carpark. Short term car parking for pick up and drop off of work items is available in the Parliament carpark on non-sitting days, booked through DPS Security in advance.

2.2.2.Public transport

[Official advice](#) is to wear a face mask, observe physical distancing and monitor capacity before boarding. Please talk with your colleagues or Member about ways that you may be able to stagger your hours to avoid peak periods that may lack capacity to physical distance. [Transport for NSW](#) advises limits may be placed on capacity on peak hour services to ensure social distancing requirements can be met. Transport tracking apps such as [TripView](#) are available with real-time service capacity information to help plan any unavoidable peak time trips.

2.3. Active transport

Walking, running and [cycling](#) is encouraged where possible. The Level 2 gym isnow open to members and staff in accordance with the ['Staff Use of Recreation Facilities policy'](#) and is subject to ongoing restrictions with regard to limited numbers (i.e. mandatory sign-in/out) and decommissioning of some machines. Alternative individual shower options remain available throughout the Tower Block, as well as facilities on Level 8 in the Fountain Court building. Bicycle parking and bike pumps are available on Levels 2 and 3 of the Parliament carpark.

2.4. Regional travel

The restrictions on travel to and from NSW from interstate have eased. Please check the ['NSW Health website](#)' for updated entry requirements and advice.

3. Entry to the Parliamentary Precinct

3.1. Restrictions and procedures on entry

The Parliamentary Precinct, following Health advice re-opened to the public on Tuesday 6 October 2020. As a result, all members, staff and visitors are required to undergo a temperature and symptoms check and to 'check-in' via the Service NSW app for contact tracing purposes. From 14 December 2020 all entrants are required to undergo a temperature check at one of the free standing 'kiosks' at entry points throughout the precinct, and check in via the Service NSW app.

By passing through the temperature kiosk and checking in, all entrants declare that they do not have COVID-19 related symptoms – see 3.4 below.

Entry points and the temperature scanners will be monitored by CCTV. Breaches of these protocols will be referred to the relevant Department Head for follow up action.

3.2. Invited Visitors

3.2.1.All invited visitors who have an appointment with a Member or staff are to undergo a kiosk temperature check and 'check-in' electronically via the Service NSW app or manually at either the LA or LC front desks.

3.2.2.A building occupant who organised the meeting is required to collect their visitor from those locations and escort them to their meeting location as per usual security protocols.

3.2.3.A visitor displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath etc) should not be admitted to the precinct.

3.2.4.On sitting days, any visitors should be taken to the nearest emperature kiosk before proceeding to their meeting. Please see details on the health/temperature checking process at 3.1.

3.2.5.Physical distancing is to be maintained in all offices and meeting spaces, i.e. a minimum of 1.5 metres apart and one person per two square metres in a room. All common

meeting rooms have maximum occupancy numbers posted. If in doubt, please contact DPS Facilities.

    3.2.6.All visitors are to be escorted from the building directly after the meeting has concluded.

3.3. Hand Sanitisation and frequent hand washing

All persons entering the Parliamentary Precinct are to sanitise their hands on entry at the sanitising points in the carpark lift lobbies, entry points on Macquarie Street or Hospital Road or the Level 6 passenger lift foyer. Once in the building, all persons should regularly wash their hands with soap and water.

3.4. Temperature and symptom checking

As noted above, anyone with symptoms similar to COVID-19 should NOT attend Parliament House at any time. All members, staff and visitors are subject to a temperature check via one of the free standing kiosks and to 'check-in' for contact tracing purposes. Anyone who receives a high temperature reading (red alarm) via the kiosk should remain in place and contact the nominated person as indicated on the kiosk for a secondary test.

Should the temperature kiosk register a high reading (red light and alarm), the person should remain in place, and call the contact identified on the kiosk sign for a secondary test. Should the secondary test with an alternate thermometer also register a high temperature, the entrant will be given a mask, and asked to leave the precinct and seek health advice.

4. Signage in the precincts

Appropriate signage as recommended by NSW Health and Safe Work Australia (updated as appropriate) will be placed around the Parliament Precinct advising all occupants of COVID-19 precautions and distancing requirements.

4.1. Lifts and general areas

Social distancing signage is located in prominent areas throughout the building, including lift lobbies, workspaces, and in lifts. 'Stand Here' floor stickers are placed in reception areas, cafes, and lifts. The signage has been placed in line with the Health advice on safe distancing for different areas.

People are encouraged to use the internal stairs when moving between floors, to avoid crowding in lifts and lift foyers.

During Divisions on sittings days, only Members (and Members' staff with mobility issues) are permitted in lifts during divisions. All parliamentary staff, all other members' staff and ministerial staff should not use the lifts until the division bells have stopped and the yellow lights have stopped flashing.

4.2. Meeting Rooms and gathering spaces

The capacity of all meeting rooms and gathering spaces is posted at or near the entrance taking into account physical distancing requirements of 2 square metres per person and minimum 1.5 metredistance per person.

5. Physical distancing

All persons must follow all signage and markings within the Parliamentary precinct, including in the café, restaurant and meeting rooms, and must keep 1.5 metres from others at all times. Physical contact not allowed includes handshaking. Spaces such as meeting and dining rooms are restricted to a maximum of 1 person per 2 square metres (sqm) of floor space.

5.1. Lifts
Only 4 persons in a lift at any time – or as otherwise signed.

5.2. Corporate Spaces
Workstations to be arranged taking into account 1.5 m distance requirements and 1 person per 2 sqm density requirements. While "hot desking" is discouraged where possible. In some corporate areas sharing desks may be required due to the need to maintain social distancing. Where this is necessary, strict cleaning measures are in place, with cleaning of desks and equipment at the beginning and end of use in accordance with Safe Work Australia Clean and Disinfect Guidelines (a copy of which is available on the DPS WHS internet page).

5.3. Common Areas
Particular caution should be exercised in common areas such as kitchens, staff rooms, tea points and bathrooms. Sharing of cutlery, crockery and appliances is strongly discouraged or is required to be disinfected after each use. Shared food, condiments or other items should not be made available.

5.4. Chambers – See plans
Both the LA and LC Chambers have detailed operational plans when Sitting during COVID-19.

6. **Health Support**
6.1. Influenza Vaccinations
All staff are strongly encouraged to obtain a seasonal influenza vaccination, either through the Parliament's in house vaccination program, or obtaining one from their Chemist or GP and seeking reimbursement via DPS WHS.

6.2. Employee Assistance services
The ongoing availability and reference to the Parliament's EAP provider, AccessEAP will be promoted, in particular their targeted COVID-19 support, information and resources. All members and staff are strongly encouraged to look after their mental health during this time, and seek advice and support from our confidential EAP provider, external support agencies such as Lifeline, or their own doctor. In addition, Human Services are available to provide support and advice on services available. The WHS Intranet page has a range of services available including links to our EAP provider and their monthly newsletter.

6.3. Webinars and in-house support
The Recruitment and Training Team will deliver webinars and/or e-learning resources on matters such as resilience, working remotely and transition to work in the office arrangements. These resources will also be made available to those not able to attend live sessions. The Parliament's eLearning platform Pulse also has a range of health and wellbeing modules for members and staff to access.

Working from Home Toolkits for parliamentary staff and members and their staff are on the WHS page and contain information about physical and psychological safety during COVID-19. Approved ongoing working from home arrangements require the satisfactory completion of a working from home ergonomic checklist providing appropriate workstation set up and equipment are being used.

7. **Access to facilities and services**
7.1. Cafes and restaurants

The details of specific catering service changes will be updated weekly, or otherwise as required. Please see the [Catering intranet page](#) for up to date details of what is available, and from which location.

- For Café Quorum on level 6, limited seating is now available, with separate entry and exit points - entry via Hospital Road corridor, exit via the door next to Facilities office.
- Measures such as "sneeze guards", a ban on "Keep Cups" and no cash handling are in place.
- Room service will continue its operations as usual.
- Strangers' Restaurant will be open for bookings on sittings days and for Members, staff and guests - Supervisor on duty will be taking contact details of all guests.
- Where there is no bookings, Members and staff may be turned away if there are no tables available. Bookings are highly recommended.
- In relation to the Staff bar, as with other outlets there is no seating with a takeaway only service.

7.2. Recreational facilities

The Parliament Pool and Gym facilities on Level 2 have re-opened (excluding the sauna, steam and squash courts until further notice). No borrowing of equipment is permitted.

7.3. Corporate services

Corporate areas in most Parliamentary areas have re-established normal operations, although more staff may be working under flexible work practices that pre-COVID.

In high access areas such as the Foyer area close to the Legislative Assembly Chamber, 'sneeze guards" have been installed and will remain in place.

8. Cleaning

8.1. Shared responsibilities

All Members and staff have a shared responsibility for cleaning and hygiene matters. This means keeping own workspaces clean. Shared utensils, food or hot-desking should be avoided. Where hot-desking is unavoidable, the workstation is to be disinfected with wipes or spray before the next person uses it. Cleaning material such as sanitiser and hand wipes will be restocked at regular intervals or as needed. Please contact [DPS Facilities](#) if supplies are required in your work area.

8.2. Regular cleaning

Cleaning operations will be supplemented by additional, and regular sanitisation throughout the day of high contact touch points such as lift buttons and door handles.

8.3. Deep cleaning

Deep cleaning will be undertaken as per NSW Health and Safe Work Australia guidelines on any area that has been identified as being visited by a person who is suspected, or confirmed as having COVID-19. In either case, the area will be closed off and the cleaning team will undertake the cleaning with appropriate personal protective equipment and the appropriate safe working method statement.

8.4. Environmental Hygiene

Expert occupational hygienists have been engaged several times during the period of COVID-19 to undertake a review of the Parliamentary precinct and make recommendations in relation to infection control. There has also been checks made by occupational hygienists on the air conditioning units in Parliament House.

9. Managing incidents

9.1. Confirmed COVID-19 case in the precinct

In the event that a person is confirmed as having COVID-19, the relevant NSW Health Public Health Unit will be in contact with the Parliament's nominated persons to conduct contract tracing and provide further advice dependent on the circumstances. NSW Health will advise what actions are required, and the Parliament will implement these directions. The offices of the Clerks, the office of the Chief Executive and the DPS WHS team can provide information about nearby COVID-19 testing facilities if required.

9.2. Text messaging alerts (TIMS)

Emergency communication via SMS messaging can be sent almost instantly to all Parliament House passholders via the Telstra Integrated Messaging System (TIMS). During the COVID-19 situation, such a warning scenario could include where a person who has attended Parliament is confirmed as having COVID-19. In this case a broadcast SMS can be sent to all passholders advising not to travel to Parliament House, and to wait for further advice.

9.3. Incident reporting

All incidents and hazards, including COVID-19 related issues should be reported as soon as possible via the Parliament's incident reporting system. Note, this can be done from any web browser, and the incident report does not need to be lodged through the Parliament's intranet. Incident Reports are monitored and actioned by the DPS WHS team and relevant managers. Incident information will be collated and reported to the Parliament's WHS Committee.

9.4. First Aid Contact List

First aid officers will follow strict infection control guidelines, including the use of gloves for all incidents, and will not provide any treatment of anyone with COVID-19 related symptoms, and will instead arrange for appropriate medical referral (ambulance/Sydney Hospital referral or assistance to attend their own medical practitioner where appropriate).
Please find a copy of the 'First Aid Officer list here'.

9.5. Emergency procedures

The Parliament's existing Emergency and Critical Incident Response Procedures will continue to apply where appropriate.

10. Review

These Guidelines will be reviewed and updated as required following changes to Public Health Orders, or official advice from lead agencies such as NSW Health and Safe Work Australia.

Version: 2.0
Date Issued: Monday 1 June 2020
Updated: Wednesday 2 December 2020

> HELPING BUSINESS GET BACK TO WORK

NSW GOVERNMENT

30 June 2020

COVID-19 Safety Plan

Effective 1 July 2020

Conference and function venues

We've developed this COVID-19 Safety Plan to help you create and maintain a safe environment for you, your workers and your customers.

Complete this plan in consultation with your workers, then share it with them. This will help slow the spread of COVID-19 and reassure your attendees that they can safely visit your business. You may need to update the plan in the future, as restrictions or advice changes – you can make changes to the plan if you've printed or saved it, or you can choose to download and create a new version of the plan.

Businesses must follow the current COVID-19 Public Health Orders, and also manage risks to staff and other people in accordance with Work Health and Safety laws. For more information and specific advice for your industry go to **nsw.gov.au**

BUSINESS DETAILS	
Business name:	Parliamentary Catering
Plan completed by:	Lee Kwiez, Binny Simon, Carlos Andrade
Approved by:	Lee Kwiez

> REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESS

Requirements for your workplace and the actions you will put in place to keep your attendees and workers safe

REQUIREMENTS	ACTIONS
Wellbeing of staff and attendees	
Exclude staff and attendees who are unwell from the premises.	Checked
Provide staff with information and training on COVID-19, including when to get tested, physical distancing and cleaning.	Checked
Make staff aware of their leave entitlements if they are sick or required to self-isolate.	Checked
Display conditions of entry (website, social media, venue entry).	Checked

Wellbeing of staff and attendees

Consider including arrangements and options for virtual attendance, such as a live stream, for high-risk people.

If you are serving alcohol at your function or conference, consider ways to encourage responsible use, such as limiting bar tabs or drink packages.

Checked

REQUIREMENTS	ACTIONS
Physical distancing	
Capacity must not exceed one person per 4 square metres of space (excluding staff).	Checked
For conferences, consider allocating people to topic-specific streams to minimise co-mingling between groups, and allocating specific seating areas to these streams for larger plenary sessions.	Checked
For functions, consider allocated seating and encourage people to remain seated as much as possible, to minimise co-mingling between seated groups.	Checked
Seating must be separated by 1.5 metres. Household or other close contacts do not need to physically distance.	Checked
If a conference has multiple sessions, consider staggering the start and finish times of different sessions to minimise crowding around the venue.	Checked
Reduce crowding wherever possible and promote physical distancing with markers on the floor in areas where people are asked to queue, such as for ticketing or for food or drinks. Use separate doors or rope barriers to mark the entry and exit wherever practical.	Checked
Consider strategies to decrease co-mingling between groups during networking events such as restricting these to allocated stream groups or conducting virtually.	Checked
Ensure alcohol at any event is only served to seated attendees.	Checked
High energy dance, as well as singing and wind instruments, can spread COVID-19 if a participant is infected. Additional planning around these activities should be undertaken from a work health and safety perspective, including ensuring 3 metres distance from the audience. Group singing or chanting is particularly high risk and so should continue to be avoided.	n/a
If you want to have dancing at the function, make sure to choose a venue that has a dancefloor area with enough space between guests. Think about strategies to avoid crowding on the dancefloor and ensure people do not take alcoholic drinks on the dancefloor. Dancefloors at weddings must be restricted to the wedding couple and wedding party only.	n/a

Physical distancing

Promote online ticket purchasing and electronic ticket checking were possible. Consider whether conference or function registration and information packs can be provided online, such as through an app or via post.	Checked
Consider presenting conference posters virtually, such as through an app or website, to prevent crowding in these spaces at the event.	Checked, via email or website
Where reasonably practical, ensure staff maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing at all times, including at meal breaks and in office or meeting rooms.	Checked
Use telephone or video for essential staff meetings where practical.	Checked
Where reasonably practical, stagger start times and breaks for staff members to minimise the risk of close contact.	Checked
Review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery and invoicing where practical.	Checked, kitchen and loading dock
Have strategies in place to manage gatherings that may occur immediately outside the premises.	Checked
Coordinate with public transport, where reasonably practical, around strategies to minimise COVID-19 risks associated with transportation to and from the venue for larger events if crowding on public transport may occur.	Checked-we could stipulate this to event organisers
Encourage private transport options to minimise crowding on public transport where practical. Consider whether parking options close to the venue could be discounted or included in the ticket price to support this.	Checked

REQUIREMENTS	ACTIONS
Hygiene and cleaning	
Adopt good hand hygiene practices.	Checked
Ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand soap and paper towels or hand dryers.	Checked; cleaners
Have hand sanitiser at key points around the facility, such as entry and exit points.	Checked

Hygiene and cleaning

Avoid self-serve or buffet-style food service.	Checked
Clean cutlery and tableware with detergent and hot water, or with a commercial grade dishwasher if available.	Checked
Menus should be laminated (clean between use), displayed or be single use.	Checked
Clean frequently used areas at least daily with detergent or disinfectant. Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times per day.	Checked
Maintain disinfectant solutions at an appropriate strength and use in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.	Checked; cleaning department
Develop strategies to address cleaning of very high-touch surfaces such as door knobs and chair arms. Consider having disinfectant wipes available for patrons to use.	Checked,; cleaning department
Staff are to wear gloves when cleaning and wash hands thoroughly before and after with soap and water.	Checked
Encourage contactless payment options.	Checked

REQUIREMENTS	ACTIONS
Record keeping	
Keep a record of name and a mobile number or email address for all staff, attendees and contractors for a period of at least 28 days. For group bookings, one contact is sufficient to support contact tracing. Ensure records are used only for the purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections and are stored confidentially and securely.	Checked; ensure organiser contacts which we would have via Micropower when the event is booked.
Employers should make staff aware of the COVIDSafe app and the benefits of the app to support contact tracing if required.	Checked
Cooperate with NSW Health if contacted in relation to a positive case of COVID-19 at your workplace, and notify SafeWork NSW on 13 10 50.	Checked