



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Sydney COVID “national emergency” underscores need for vigilance**

In response to New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian’s declaration of continuing high daily case numbers of COVID-19 in Sydney as a “national emergency”, the Victorian Transport Association has reminded freight operators and their drivers to remain vigilant about safety and hygiene, and to closely follow state and national rules and regulations to prevent transmission.

“As we know too well from what’s happened in recent weeks, there is a genuine risk of transmission across state borders despite everyone’s best efforts to contain the spread,” said VTA CEO Peter Anderson.

“Freight workers must continue to carry out their essential work which will require interstate linehaul operations to continue, so as transport workers we must continue to closely follow all the rules and regulations that apply to cross-border permit holders. These include compulsory mask-wearing, hand hygiene and sanitization, social distancing, checking in and of course regular testing and monitoring for COVID symptoms.”

Anderson also encouraged eligible drivers to get vaccinated and to consult their doctor about any questions or concerns they may or may not have about choice of vaccinations.

“Whilst some groups have called for transport workers to be prioritised over others for vaccination, our view is that as an industry we have performed exceptionally well to date moving more freight than ever around the country. If we continue to remain vigilant our sector won’t be a source of transmission.

“But this can only happen if operators to continue to support their drivers with the tools they need to keep COVID safe, and if drivers follow the rules and behave responsibly when interacting with others in the course of their duties.”

Mr Anderson encouraged operators to familiarise themselves with [Victorian Border Crossing Permit Directions \(No 23\)](#) which outlines new requirements. Transport workers are eligible for a Specified Worker Permit, that allows for multiple entries during its 14-day validity period. A current condition of the permit is a COVID test once every three days during each permit validity period when entering from a red zone.

The VTA has recommended that in addition to additional testing stations at Beveridge and Broadford on the Hume Freeway, Freight Victoria establish a station on the Princes Highway at Cann River for linehaul drivers travelling in and out of Victoria via Gippsland.

“We know the more onerous testing requirements are an issue for drivers and operators which is why we are advocating for testing centre locations to be made available where drivers are out and about working,” he said.

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