

## Qantas CEO flags compulsory COVID vaccination for overseas flights

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Qantas plans to make vaccination against COVID-19 compulsory for passengers once the airline resumes international flying next year, and expects other airlines around the world will follow suit.

Speaking with Channel 9's *A Current Affair* this evening, CEO Alan Joyce said "we are looking at changing our terms and conditions to say for international travellers, that we will ask people to have a vaccination before they can get on the aircraft."

The prospects of mandatory vaccination on domestic flights would depend on "what happens with COVID-19 in the market, but certainly for international visitors coming out, and people leaving the country, we think that's a necessity."

Joyce added that proof of vaccination would likely be stored in an electronic 'digital passport' which is already under development by airlines and governments around the world.

His remarks are in line with the government's new National Vaccination Policy released earlier this month, which suggested that visitors from overseas might have to produce a vaccination certificate before boarding their flight to Australia.

"There may... be circumstances where the Australian Government and other governments may introduce border entry or re-entry requirements that are conditional on proof of vaccination," the Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy states.

### A global requirement

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Qantas would not be alone in insisting that travellers pack a passport containing proof of vaccination.

"I've been talking with my colleagues at other airlines around the globe, and I think that's going to be a common theme across the board," Joyce added.

"What we're looking at is how you can have a vaccination passport, an electronic version of it, that certifies what the vaccine is, is it acceptable to the country you are travelling to."

"There's a lot of logistics, a lot of technology that will be needed to put in place to make this happen, but the airlines and the governments are working on this as we speak."

*Executive Traveller* understands that work is already being done by several government agencies on how the smartchip in modern passports could be adapted to include a 'vaccination field' or if a new passport containing some form of vaccination stamp might be needed.

Joyce added that he was "very optimistic" on the prospects of a vaccine, which "could see (international) borders open up quite significantly through 2021."

## **New vaccines show promise**

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His comments came as results from the latest trial of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine indicated it could be 70% effective, although the company claimed 90% efficacy could be reached using a regimen of an initial half-dose to 'prime' the body, later followed by a second full dose.

The Australian government has signed up for 33 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which would be manufactured locally in the Melbourne laboratory of global biotech company CSL.

A further 10 million doses have been ordered of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which earlier this month was shown to prevent more than 90% of symptomatic infections in a trial of tens of thousands of volunteers.

An additional vaccine under development at the University of Queensland, with around 50 million doses to be mass-produced locally from mid-2021, is expected to begin phase-three clinical trials before the end of this year.

## **Australia's vaccination rollout**

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Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt has said the country's COVID-19 vaccine program - likely beginning with the Pfizer-BioNTech shot - was "on track" for delivery in March 2021.

"Our national goal is to ensure that all Australians who seek to be vaccinated are vaccinated by the end of 2021," Hunt said.

Injections will be free to all Australians and Medicare-eligible visa holders, although they won't be mandatory, with Prime Minister Scott Morrison affirming that mandatory Covid vaccination "is not the government's policy and has never