

ABIC

AESTHETIC & BEAUTY
INDUSTRY COUNCIL

15th September NSW Treasury Meeting

ABIC Industry Representative - Stefanie Milla ABIC Director & CEO

Meeting Attendance:

James Hunter - Covid Taskforce

Fiona Dewar - Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Delivery and Performance

Heads of Industry

Questions posed to government for consideration:

- Rapid antigen testing for risk mitigation is only available in 8 professions, it should be made available to more industries, including the personal services category?
- Are there liability issues regarding non-vaccinated workers and customers that may infect vaccinated people within a business?
- Private health insurance - Will policies include cover for non-vaccinated people - in other countries they do?
- Competing channels of advice or support - business don't go to government for business advice, we don't have one clear channel of information, we need one.
- Do we need multiple forms of proof for identification of vaccine? Passport plus QR code?
- Are health measures legally enforceable at the moment or do they require additional legislation to cover businesses?
- There are concerns regarding abuse and verbal altercations from clients and staff over vaccine mandates, will business get financial support for added security costs? Customer aggression has gone up
- We need clear directions on all orders, mandates and regulations that are released from government.

- Currently there is disjointed and confusing communication from government, conflicting information and it is not up to date on government websites. Can we have a dedicated information portal and sign up for automatic updates? There is a lag of hours between an announcement or a presser and the release information and public health orders.
- In industries with younger workers - 70% of people under 35yo may not be vaccinated by the time of reopening, what provisions are being made for this?
- Reopening and getting back to normal workflow and cashflow will be slow as our workforce has halved due to extended lockdowns. Businesses need additional cashflow support. Will this be provided?
- Training - people have left and not returning to many industries, beauty and aesthetics included. We require grants and programs to get people back and for training to reskill and upskill people that have been away from their professional for months.
- It will be a slower reopening this time due to extended health and safety measures and the extended lockdown - The 'voucher' industry stimulus offer should be given to other sectors including beauty.
- We require funding for businesses that are seeking financial or business advice as a result of being affect by the Covid lockdowns, we need to provide real support to those that are requiring assistance.
- We require continued cashflow support after reopening, a cut off of grant support will result in the hardship or failure of many small businesses.
- Businesses are confused regarding the available grants, they have Grant "overload" as there are too many types, interpretation is needed in the existing frameworks, and increased monetary support within those frameworks.
- Inconsistencies are present in the public health plan, such as the requirement for client masks within treatments.
- We require processes and instructions on how we communicate these to our consumers and staff?
- Guidance on how to help and manage staff that choose not to be vaccinated.
- Certainty around mandates and timeframes for mandates - how long will vaccination mandates be in place? Will they be long lasting, will they be only temporary and in place during the timeframe of the public health orders?

Comments from Fiona Dewar

- Density settings of 4sqm are only for double vaccinated people - They won't come into action until 70% double vaccination rate is achieved.
- Personal services capped at 5 clients - that is their firm stance, it is different to gym due to the amount of time that a client spends with their therapist.

Stefanie Milla on behalf of ABIC - Comments and Questions to Fiona Dewar:

- Personal Services qualifications and skills have evolved over the past 10 year with infection controls standards inherent in our training.
- 4sqm rule without the added 5 cap should apply to personal services and beauty as with gyms, due to the increased safety standards within our industry.
- Gyms do not have the same standard of safety and infection control measures, yet they have a 20 cap for classes and no cap for general workout areas.
- Regional that have come out of lockdown have had few to no cases of covid, and they are often large destination spas with over 10 treatment rooms, therefore a 5 cap would unnecessarily and negatively impact already struggling businesses and employees.
- No consultation has been made with our industry prior to government decisions.
- Can consideration or consultation be made on this matter?
- Fiona Dewar responded with advice that they may look at the 5 cap again at the 80% vaccination mark. She reiterated the "long time with clients" reasoning (which is incorrect - average beauty service time is 30 mins, average gym class time is 40 mins)
- Strong correspondence was subsequently made by Stefanie Milla to James Hunter remove the Covid taskforce and Fiona Dewar to overturn the five-cap rule. (Attached to page separately)