

# COVID-19: Development Industry Update

## Members Update - Construction Industry PEAKS

Thursday July 29, 2021

**Authorised workers** (those allowed to leave the restricted LGAs)

A lot of work was undertaken today to advise government of a list of key “authorised workers” who should be allowed to leave the restricted LGAs to ensure that construction in the rest of Greater Sydney can re-start as planned.

With the system NSW proposes, there is a specific need for all of the following rare and skilled trades to be available to make projects work.

For major construction site, highly skilled specialist trades are fundamental to any site working. All outdoor trades should be authorised workers (though this may be a next step). In the meantime, the following list of critical “authorised trades” must include:

A list of suggested authorised workers was prepared by Urban Taskforce and included:

- Steel fixers and post tension contractors
- Scaffolders and specialist riggers
- Piling contractors
- Glazing and specialist façade
- Electricians for critical electrical work (required to ensure site safety and construction work)
- Fire safety installation
- Plumbers
- Site engineers and engineering specialties
- Crane operators

Other groups (MBA, HIA, UDIA, ETU, NECA, CFMEU, ACA, etc) all provided their own input to INSW who are co-ordinating this work.

Health and Treasury advise that in the context of growing COVID case numbers, the key issue for Health is not what is needed to make Construction work – it is how many additional people would any proposed expansion of the authorised worker list caused to come out from the 8 LGAs and onto construction sites?

We would say the more the better – they argue exactly the opposite. That is the conundrum.

Health are very clear that they want to limit movement in and out of those LGAs and this is the primary objective. The NSW Government will publish the initial list of authorised construction workers tomorrow.

**Antigen Testing** is not yet TGA approved, or NSW Health approved and is not a substitute for full PCR testing. The Antigen tests are quite expensive and Government's current proposal is that **industry pays for the costs** (estimated between \$35 - \$70 per test). Government was advised that if these tests were required regularly, the costs would be too great for industry to bare.

Notwithstanding the question of "authorised workers" Treasury were advised today that all land sub-divisions and industrial sites should be permitted as workers are outdoor and well distanced.

## **Exemptions**

Very few actual exemptions are being granted – but many of the requests for exemptions are not necessary as they relate to works that are already permitted. The public health orders on the Service NSW website notes the details for exemptions.

Please see the Service NSW web site and this page in particular as this includes media releases and fact sheets which cover a lot of the questions that have been directed to the Urban Taskforce by its members.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/greater-sydney#construction-activity>

There are a clear 8 reasons why construction work can carry on

Construction activity which is permitted in all LGAs include construction work:

- to ensure the safety or security of the construction site
- to deal with environmental risks
- to maintain and ensure the integrity of critical plant, equipment or assets, including partially completed works, that would otherwise deteriorate
- to receive deliveries of supplies that would otherwise deteriorate
- to maintain public utilities
- to ensure the safe operation of existing transport infrastructure
- by or on behalf of NSW Health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- because of an emergency.

**Tom Forrest**

**CEO**

**Urban Taskforce**

**m. +61 429 460 863**

**e. [CEO@UrbanTaskforce.com.au](mailto:CEO@UrbanTaskforce.com.au)**

**For more information go to**

<https://www.urbantaskforce.com.au/covid-19-information-for-the-development-industry/>

or

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/greater-sydney#construction-activity>

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