

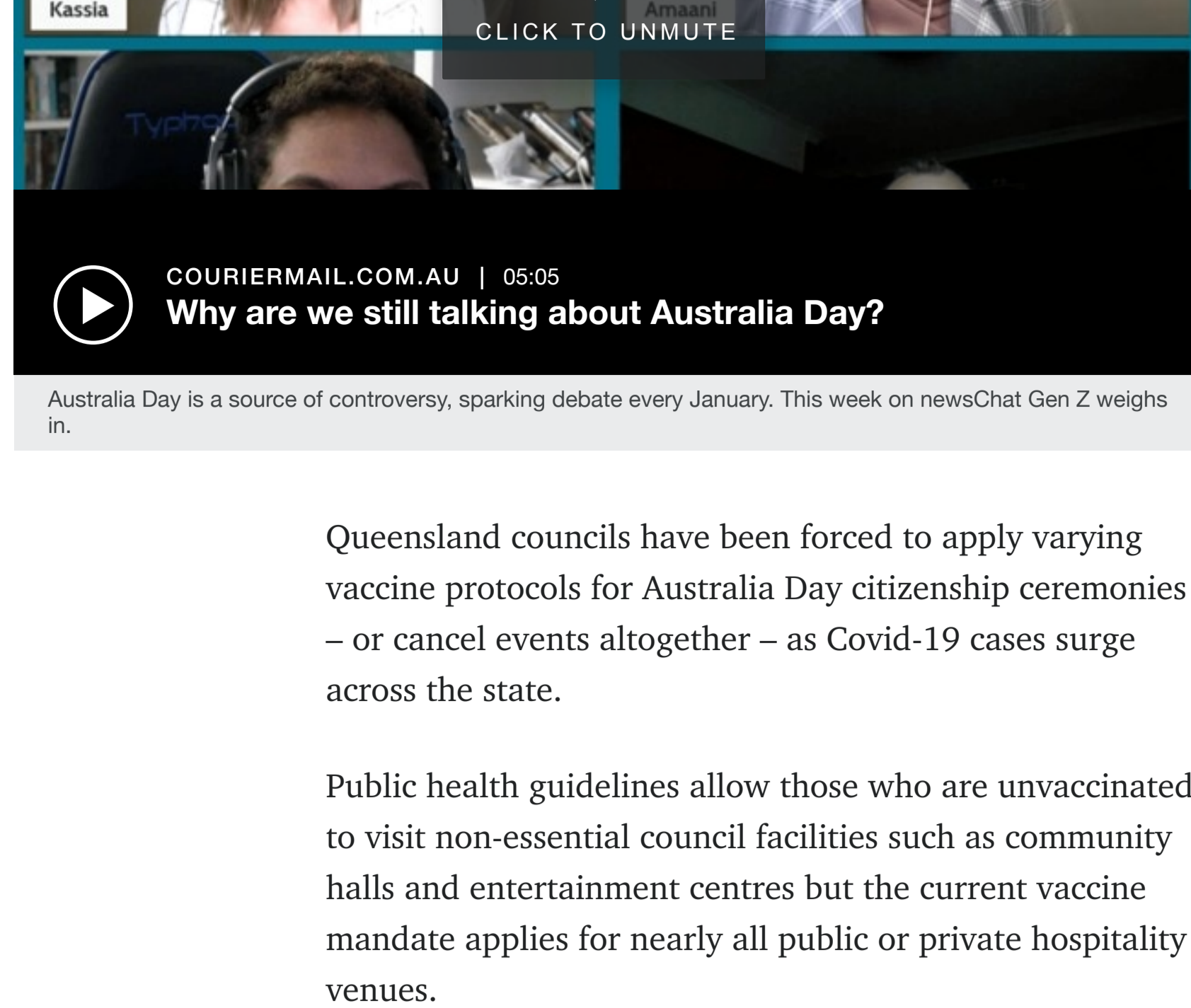
News > Queensland

Confusion over vaccine rules at citizenship ceremonies

Councils across Queensland have been forced to make last-minute changes to citizenship ceremonies. Here's how your council plans to run the Australia Day event.

James Hall and Zathia Bazeer

4 min read January 25, 2022 - 4:34PM



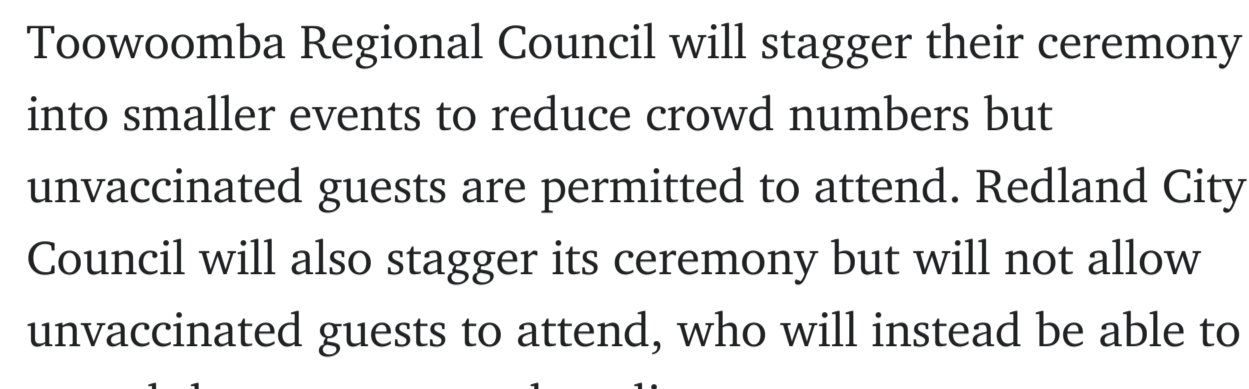
Australia Day is a source of controversy, sparking debate every January. This week on newsChat Gen Z weighs in.

Queensland councils have been forced to apply varying vaccine protocols for Australia Day citizenship ceremonies – or cancel events altogether – as Covid-19 cases surge across the state.

Public health guidelines allow those who are unvaccinated to visit non-essential council facilities such as community halls and entertainment centres but the current vaccine mandate applies for nearly all public or private hospitality venues.

This means the scheduled venue where citizenship ceremonies were booked to take place have different health directions while the state government said each vaccine mandate was a matter for individual councils.

Mackay Regional Council has adopted the extraordinary measure of holding two separate ceremonies on Australia Day for those receiving their citizenship — [one for vaccinated and one for unvaccinated](#), while Mount Isa City Council is still finalising details when contacted by *The Courier-Mail*.

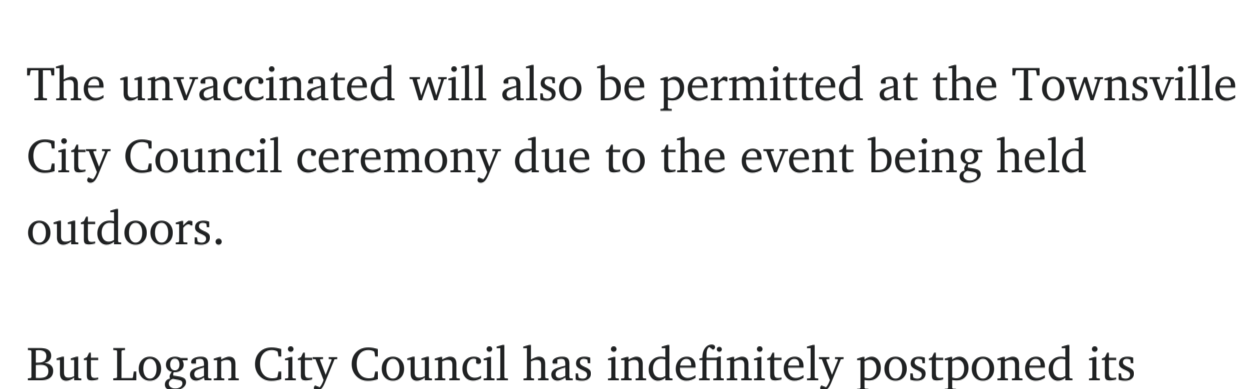


Mackay Regional Council will hold two ceremonies this year. Picture: Tara Miko

Both Brisbane and Gold Coast city councils will be held at the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland and the Home of the Arts respectively, where those who visit are required to show proof of vaccination.

Toowoomba Regional Council will stagger their ceremony into smaller events to reduce crowd numbers but unvaccinated guests are permitted to attend. Redland City Council will also stagger its ceremony but will not allow unvaccinated guests to attend, who will instead be able to attend the event remotely online.

Likewise, no vaccination rules apply for Moreton Bay Regional Council's event, but numbers have been reduced.



Citizenship ceremonies are celebrated across country on Australia Day. Picture: Brendan Radke

The unvaccinated will also be permitted at the Townsville City Council ceremony due to the event being held outdoors.

But Logan City Council has indefinitely postponed its ceremony due to the soaring infection numbers in Queensland, while the Fraser Coast Regional Council and North Burnett Regional Council have cancelled their ceremonies altogether.

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Scenic Rim Regional Council said it will continue with the citizenship ceremony for those who are double vaccinated but it has postponed the Australia Day Awards event.

“Our whole approach has been taking a proactive approach and particularly where some of the most vulnerable members are concerned,” a spokesperson said.

The Courier-Mail attempted to contact every city and regional council across the state.

HOW EACH REGIONAL AND CITY COUNCIL WILL HOST CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

Barcaldine Regional Council: Event will be postponed due to Covid. Previous events were recorded and posted online.

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council: Event postponed and will wait until the health officer makes announcements.

Central Highlands Regional Council: N/A

Gladstone Regional Council: N/A

Isaac Regional Council: N/A

Longreach Regional Council: Unvaccinated allowed due to all events being held outdoors.

Mackay Regional Council: Event split into vaccinated and unvaccinated

Rockhampton Regional Council: Covid safe outdoor event. People will need to check in, vaccination and masks are not mandatory.

Whitsunday Regional Council: Invite only citizen ceremony to keep it Covid safe, attendees have to register, check-in, wear masks and social distancing needs to be maintained. Guests can bring three additional people to the event.

Cairns Regional Council: Two citizenship ceremonies will be held at Council's civic room on Australia Day. These ceremonies are being held with restrictions on numbers and all attendees must wear masks. All attendees were required to check-in, be fully vaccinated and wear a mask unless they were seated.

Cassowary Coast Regional Council: Event will be held at Innisfail Shire Hall. Council will ensure Covid safe practices and social distancing. Invitation only and limited numbers.

Charters Towers Regional Council: N/A

Mount Isa City Council: Was still discussing plan when contacted by *The Courier-Mail*.

Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council: N/A

Tablelands Regional Council: Event is inside and guests will need to prove they are vaccinated on arrival due to the event being held at a private hospitality facility. Council has reduced capacity of the event to just 60 in response to soaring case numbers.

Torres Strait Regional Council: N/A

Townsville City Council: Unvaccinated allowed due to event being held outdoors. Attendees will be required to check-in, wear masks and socially distance.

Brisbane City Council: Guests need to show proof of vaccination.

Bundaberg Regional Council: Guests need to show proof of vaccination.

Fraser Coast Regional Council: Cancelled due to soaring case numbers

Gold Coast City Council: Cancelled due to soaring case numbers

Goondiwindi Regional Council: Cancelled the public event and held an intimate indoor event last week, where attendees had to prove they were vaccinated.

Gympie Regional Council: N/A

Ipswich City Council: Guests need to show proof of vaccination.

Lockyer Valley Regional Council: Held in shire hall. Have to wear masks and check in. Ticketed event for indoor events and limited capacity. No requirement for vaccines.

Logan City Council: Event indefinitely postponed with details to be announced at a later date.

Maranoa Regional Council: Provided no detail on vaccination status

Moreton Bay Regional Council: No vaccine rule. Event is proceeding with reduced numbers with some recipients scheduled for online.

North Burnett Regional Council: Cancelled due to high cases and risk of council staff. Thought it was safer to cancel the event.

Redland City Council: Due to the escalating Covid-19 situation, Redland City Council has split its traditional Australia Day citizenship ceremony into two smaller face-to-face ceremonies for the vaccinated and two virtual ceremonies for the unvaccinated.

Scenic Rim Regional Council: Everyone needs to be double vaccinated, check-in, sanitise and social distance. Australia Day Awards have been postponed due to high cases and considering high risk older people.

Somerset Regional Council: Holding ceremony at civic centre where only vaccinated people can attend.

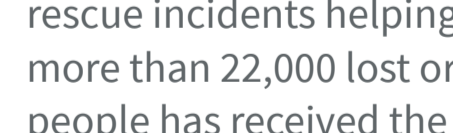
South Burnett Regional Council: N/A

Southern Downs Regional Council: Invitation only for an outdoor event, therefore no restrictions on vaccinations

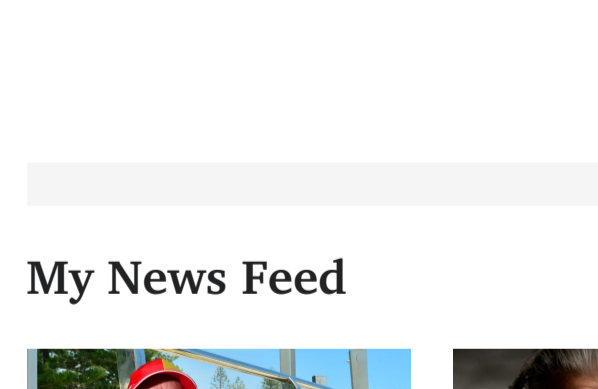
Sunshine Coast Regional Council: Attendees will need to be vaccinated and friends and family are unable to attend due to limitations on crowd numbers and social distancing.

Toowoomba Regional Council: Will hold three separate functions for the 64 individuals receiving their citizenship to ensure crowd capacity is contained. Unvaccinated permitted to attend in line with state health direction due to it being held at city hall.

Western Downs Regional Council: N/A



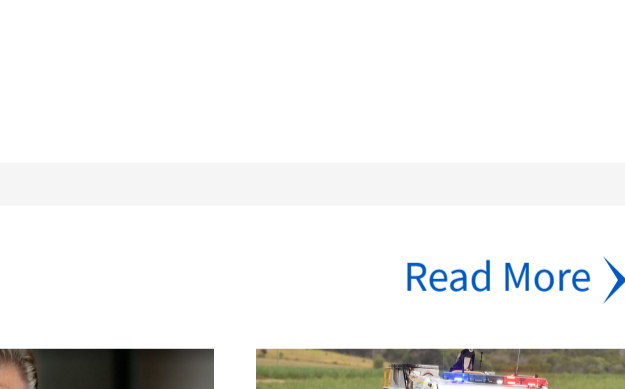
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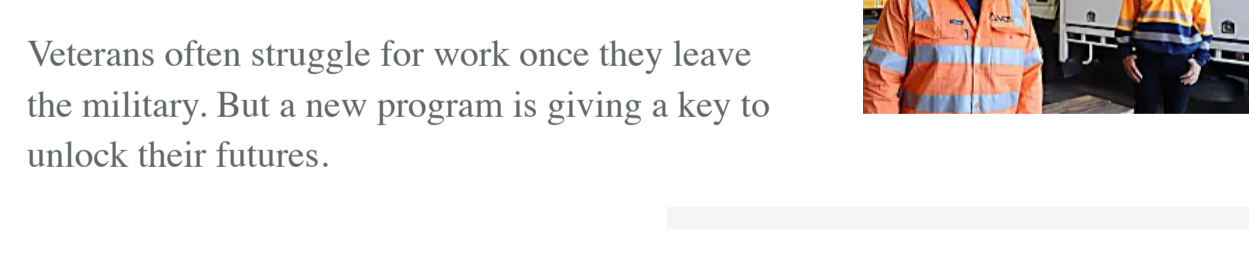


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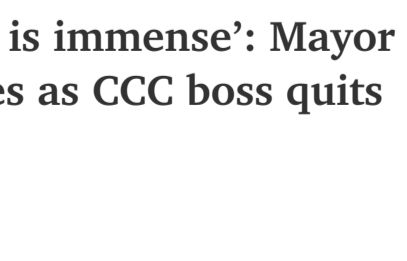
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