2062

N° 465-2021

The Australian Embassy in Hanoi presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and has the honour to advise that, from October 2021, the Australian Government will be issuing an International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate to outbound travellers.

To ensure a high level of integrity and global interoperability, the certificate complies with World Health Organization and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) requirements. It is secured against forgery with a Visible Digital Seal (VDS). VDS is the QR code format the ICAO has specified for cross-border air travel.

Vaccination information in the certificate is drawn from the Australian Immunisation Register, the official national database of vaccinations recorded in Australia.

The certificates will be available to Australians and foreign nationals who have been immunised through Australia's vaccine roll-out.

Attached to this Note are four official specimen certificates, together with background information about their features and how authorities can authenticate them.

The Australian Embassy in Hanoi avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam the assurances of its highest consideration.

Hanoi
20 September 2021

Australian Government

International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate

Proof of Vaccination	Issued by AUS	Version 1	UVCI VB0009990025

Protect the QR code from marks and damage

Name of the holder:	**CITIZEN, JOHN**
Date of birth:	**2004-03-20**
Sex:	**M**
Passport number:	**PA0940385**

Visible Digital Seal (VDS-NC)
Authorities can verify that this document is true and unaltered with a QR reader that checks against Australia's ePassport Country Signing Certificate Authority public key.

SPECIMEN

VACCINATION EVENT		
Vaccine or prophylaxis: **XM68M6 (COVID-19)**	Vaccine brand: **AstraZeneca Vaxzevria**	Disease or agent targeted: **RA01.0 (COVID-19)**

Date of vaccination:	Dose number:	Country of vaccination:	Administering centre:	Vaccine batch number:
2021-04-02	1	AUS	**Community Nurse**	317711P

VACCINATION EVENT		
Vaccine or prophylaxis: XM68M6 (COVID-19)	Vaccine brand: **Moderna Spikevax**	Disease or agent targeted: **RA01.0 (COVID-19)**

Date of vaccination:	Dose number:	Country of vaccination:	Administering centre:	Vaccine batch number:
2021-10-03	2	AUS	**Primary Health**	**Not recorded**

This document bears a Visible Digital Seal for a Non-Constrained Environment (VDS-NC), as specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization. UVCI means 'Unique Vaccination Certificate Identifier', XM68M6 and RA01.0 are World Health Organization codes for COVID-19.
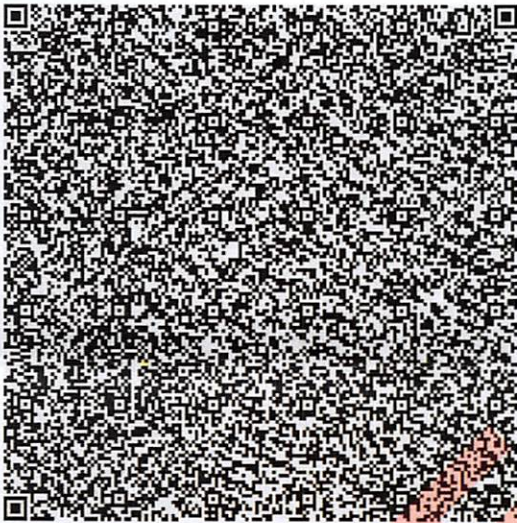
Australian Government

International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate

SPECIMEN

Name of the holder: **CITIZEN, JANE SUE**

Date of birth: **1961-05-15**

Sex: **F**

Passport number: **PA0941262**

Visible Digital Seal (VDS-NC)
Authorities can verify that this document is true and unaltered with a QR reader that checks against Australia's ePassport Country Signing Certificate Authority public key.

Protect the QR code from marks and damage

VACCINATION EVENT

Vaccine or prophylaxis: XM68M6 (COVID-19)		Vaccine brand: AstraZeneca Vaxzevria	Disease or agent targeted: RA01.0 (COVID-19)	
Date of vaccination: 2021-09-15	Dose number: 1	Country of vaccination: AUS	Administering centre: General Practitioner	Vaccine batch number: 300157P

This document bears a Visible Digital Seal for a Non-Constrained Environment (VDS-NC), as specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization. UVCI means 'Unique Vaccination Certificate Identifier', XM68M6 and RA01.0 are World Health Organization codes for COVID-19.
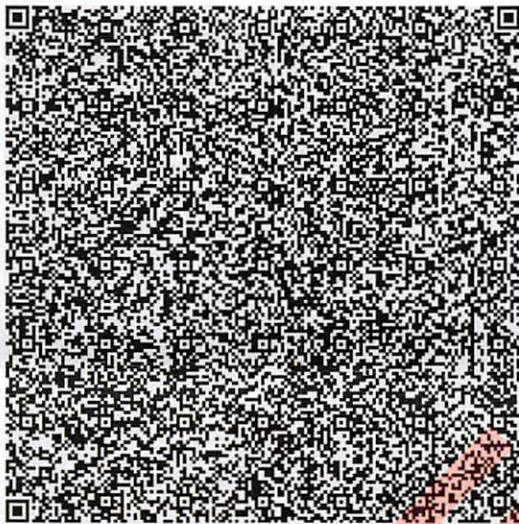
![Australian Government Coat of Arms]

Australian Government

International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate

Proof of Vaccination	Issued by AUS	Version 1	UVCI VB0009990009

SPECIMEN

Name of the holder:	**CITIZEN, JANE**
Date of birth:	**1960-01-09**
Sex:	**F**
Passport number:	**PA0941448**

Visible Digital Seal (VDS-NC)
Authorities can verify that this document is true and unaltered with a QR reader that checks against Australia's ePassport Country Signing Certificate Authority public key.

Protect the QR code from marks and damage

VACCINATION EVENT		
Vaccine or prophylaxis: **XM68M6** (COVID-19)	Vaccine brand: **AstraZeneca Vaxzevria**	Disease or agent targeted: **RA01.0** (COVID-19)

Date of vaccination:	Dose number:	Country of vaccination:	Administering centre:	Vaccine batch number:
2021-05-08	1	AUS	**General Practitioner**	300161P
2021-08-11	2	AUS	**Public Health Unit**	302359P

This document bears a Visible Digital Seal for a Non-Constrained Environment (VDS-NC), as specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization. UVCI means 'Unique Vaccination Certificate Identifier', XM68M6 and RA01.0 are World Health Organization codes for COVID-19.

Australian Government

International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate

SPECIMEN

| Proof of Vaccination | Issued by AUS | Version 1 | UVCI VB0009990038 |

Name of the holder: **CITIZEN, JANE CATHERINE**

Date of birth: **1977-05-16**

Sex: **F**

Passport number: **PF0911009**

Visible Digital Seal (VDS-NC)

Authorities can verify that this document is true and unaltered with a QR reader that checks against Australia's ePassport Country Signing Certificate Authority public key.

Protect the QR code from marks and damage

VACCINATION EVENT

Vaccine or prophylaxis:	Vaccine brand:	Disease or agent targeted:
XM68M6 (COVID-19)	**Pfizer Comirnaty**	**RA01.0** (COVID-19)

Date of vaccination:	Dose number:	Country of vaccination:	Administering centre:	Vaccine batch number:
2021-06-13	1	AUS	**Community Health**	EP2163
2021-07-01	2	AUS	**General Practitioner**	ER7449

This document bears a Visible Digital Seal for a Non-Constrained Environment (VDS-NC), as specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization. UVCI means 'Unique Vaccination Certificate Identifier', XM68M6 and RA01.0 are World Health Organization codes for COVID-19.

Australia's International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate

From October 2021, the Australian Government is issuing an **International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate** to outbound travellers.

Information in the certificate comes from the **Australian Immunisation Register**, the official database of vaccinations recorded in Australia. The certificate will be available to **Australian and foreign passport holders** alike.

For protection against forgery, the certificate uses a Quick Response (QR) code known as a **Visible Digital Seal (VDS** or **VDS-NC).** The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has specified VDS as its standard for health certificates for cross-border air travel. The World Health Organization has endorsed the format. VDS is highly secure and globally interoperable, because like the hundreds of millions of ePassports on issue around the world it uses ICAO public-key infrastructure.

What's in the certificate?

Included with this information sheet are **official specimens**. They illustrate four of many possible vaccination scenarios that are consistent with the ICAO standard and with vaccination practice in Australia. Each one has:

- the Australian Government **crest**, centred at the top
- the **title**, "International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate"
- a **header row** containing:
    - the words "Proof of Vaccination"
    - the **issuing state** ("AUS")
    - the version number ("1")
    - a **Unique Vaccination Certificate Identifier (UVCI)**
- the **VDS QR code**, containing all the data elements, as well as signature information for authenticating the certificate
- the holder's **name**, in capitals, with family name first
    - long names wrap onto a second line
    - because of space constraints, the name in the VDS QR code may be shorter than what appears in the plain-English text of the printable PDF
    - the names (and other biodata) in the specimens are fictitious
- **date of birth**, in the format YYYY-MM-DD
- **gender** ('Sex'), given as "M", "F" or "X"
- the holder's **passport number**
    - the numbers in the specimens are from Australian passport specimens
- **vaccination history**, which includes, for each type of vaccine administered, ("Vaccination event") the brand, date, batch number, administering centre and country of each dose
    - the manufacturer name is included in the vaccine brand name
    - the "Dose number" is in chronological order across Vaccination events
- a note at the end explaining abbreviations and codes in the certificate.

Is the certificate valid in both paper and digital form?

Yes. Travellers receive the certificate as a **PDF**, from which they may load the QR code into a digital wallet or a travel app. Because it contains all the information in the PDF and can be authenticated, the QR code is valid by itself as a digital vaccination credential.

Can someone have more than one certificate?

There's no limit to the number of valid certificates an individual may hold, for instance if they have **concurrent passports** or passports that reflect **dual nationality**.

How can I tell if the holder is fully vaccinated?

VDS health certificates don't contain a statement about whether the holder is fully vaccinated. They simply record the holder's **vaccination history.** Whether that history satisfies current health policy is a matter for authorities in countries the traveller visits.

For this reason, VDS health certificates may sometimes only list one dose of a two-dose vaccine.

Where's the expiry date?

VDS health certificates have **no expiry date** because they make no time-sensitive assessment of whether the holder is fully vaccinated. They simply record the holder's vaccination history. Holders who have further vaccinations can get a new certificate, but the first certificate is not cancelled.

What are the specifications?

Australia's international certificate complies with the ICAO specifications for Visible Digital Seals for Non-Constrained Environments (VDS-NC), version 1.1. Australia would be glad to assist any country interested in technical advice on how to meet the specifications and issue VDS certificates.

What does it mean that I can verify the document against Australia's ePassport country key?

Country Signing Certificate Authority (CSCA) public keys are the root of trust for ICAO's public-key infrastructure, which underpins the ePassports issued by more than 140 countries worldwide. CSCA public keys are available from the ICAO Public Key Directory and the German Master List. Australia's is also published on the Australian Passport Office website.

Taking advantage of these keys, authorities can use **passport reading machines** at borders and **QR apps** on mobile devices to authenticate – to the same very high level of confidence as a passport chip – that a VDS QR code was written by the purported issuing authority and has not been altered.

How do I upgrade my passport readers? Where do I find QR apps?

As a rule, passport readers can natively read QR codes. To process VDS, they require relatively minor software updates. Australia has been liaising with industry to make these updates available as soon as possible. We recommend border authorities contact their providers to follow up on this.

It is not hard for suppliers to configure existing government and private sector QR apps, including apps developed for other vaccination certificate formats, to read and authenticate VDS QR codes. New apps with VDS functionality will also emerge as countries begin to adopt the standard.

To ensure there are no gaps in the meantime, the Australian Passport Office has published a simple, free app of its own, called "**VDS-NC Checker**". The app is available in the Apple store. An Android version will be available on or before 27 September in the Google Play store (for devices with a QR reading capability). The app will work if you try it out on the specimens.

The VDS-NC Checker app

What is VDS-NC?

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has specified Visible Digital Seals as its standard for cross-border digital health certificates, including COVID-19 vaccination and testing certificates. The World Health Organization has endorsed the standard.

ICAO first developed Visible Digital Seals in 2016. The European Union has proved the technology by using it on Schengen visas. In May 2021, ICAO adapted the standard for use in health certificates. To avoid confusion between visa and health uses, the official name of the health standard is 'Visible Digital Seals for Non-Constrained Environments' or **VDS-NC**.

VDS-NC certificates are **secure** and **interoperable**. They:

- leverage the **ePassport public key infrastructure** (PKI) that ICAO member states around the world have been using since 2004
- are like a passport chip in QR format, with the same high level of **security against forgery**
- can be **authenticated offline**, using keys available from the ICAO Public Key Directory and other published Master Lists, such as the German Master List
- comply with **World Health Organization** guidance on digital secure vaccination certificates
- are compatible with digital wallets and COVID-19 travel apps such as the **IATA TravelPass**.

Because VDS-NC uses the same ICAO PKI as ePassports, it will be simple for suppliers to update passport reader software and QR apps to process VDS-NCs. But because the standard is new, not all suppliers have made these changes. To fill any gaps, and ensure that no authority is without the capacity to process VDS-NCs, the Australian Passport Office has developed the VDS-NC Checker app.

What does the app do?

The app uses ICAO PKI to authenticate whether a 2D barcode under inspection:

- is a VDS-NC
- was written by the purported issuing authority
- is unaltered.

If the answer to all these questions is yes, then the QR code is an **authentic VDS-NC**.

If the VDS-NC is authentic, the app displays the most important information from the certificate, including the holder's biodata and COVID-19 immunisations. There's also an option to view the **full set of data** on the certificate.

If the QR code is **not a VDS-NC**, or if it's **not authentic**, the app displays a message to that effect:
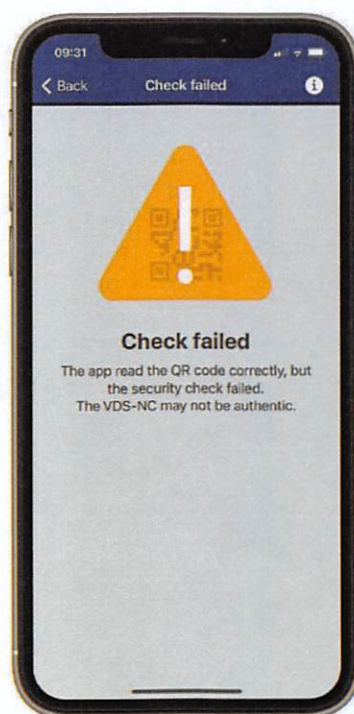
Is the app just for Australian certificates?

While the initial release authenticates vaccination certificates issued by Australia, future updates will authenticate VDS-NCs issued by **all other VDS-NC issuing countries**.

Does the app tell me if a person is fully vaccinated?

No, it shows the **vaccination history** so that **you** can judge if the holder is fully vaccinated.

That's how the VDS-NC standard is meant to work. It leaves decisions in the hands of inspecting authorities in the **receiving** state, not the **issuing** state.

What about privacy?

The app has very strong privacy restrictions. It collects no personal information from you – there's no login or password. You don't have to enter your email address or phone number. And the app doesn't store or transmit any of the information it reads from VDS-NCs.

More information is in our Privacy statement.