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Building the platform to ensure construction zones meet all Covid regulations

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THE shutdown of construction was a shock to us all, but we recognise the responsibility we have been given in getting the green light to reopen.

At a time so many industries are being pummelled by the necessary health restrictions in place to protect us all, it is not a responsibility we take lightly.

Construction sites were already one of the safest places you could be during the pandemic – but with increased testing, tighter controls on site movements and reduced numbers, we are confident the industry has what it takes to keep our people and communities safe.

During the pandemic we have proved to be adaptable and responsive to the changing infection control requirements across different states and have well-honed Covid-safe procedures that have been added to our rigorous work health and safety protections.

Over the last two weeks, construction companies, unions, subcontractors and the NSW government have worked closely together on the plan to reopen. The level of collaboration was beyond anything I've seen in my time in the industry – and was based on all of us wanting one thing: our people to be able to work safely.

While the reopening is welcomed, some of our colleagues in other parts of the industry are still shut down, and some projects will be heavily impacted by restrictions preventing their workers from leaving local government areas. This is an important first step and we look forward to a process that allows



our industry to fully reopen.

One in 10 people in the Australian workforce are employed in construction, the majority of which cannot work from home. And the infrastructure investment is critical to getting our economy back on track after a tough 18 months.

We are encouraging all our direct employees and subcontractors to get vaccinated. Vaccination is our way out of this in the long term.

Every one of our sites have strict Covid-safe checklists they must adhere to, and sites will be sectioned off into zones to cut down on exposure risks.

We have offered two of our projects – the Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment and Sydney Metro Tunnel Stations Excavations – as sites to be considered for trials of rapid antigen testing as an extra safety measure to protect our teams and the local community.

In the days before the shutdown, our Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment site had introduced PCR testing and tested more than 500 people in a day – all returned negative results.

While safety measures in place across the industry were already strong, I'm confident these have been enhanced to further protect lives while also protecting livelihoods.

Joe Barr is CEO of John Holland