

UNION WINS PAID VACCINATION LEAVE – GOVERNMENTS IGNORE WORKERS’ VACCINE PLEAS



12 August 2021

After initially refusing, Australia Post has now agreed to the Union’s calls for paid leave for members to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination.

Members can now arrange to leave work up to two hours early, on paid time, to attend a pre-booked vaccination appointment, or attend a walk-in vaccination clinic.

However, the fact remains that most postal and telecommunications workers remain ineligible to receive a vaccine in most parts of the country.

The CEPU has written to Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt calling for specific occupations within our industries to be added to the eligible workers’ list to receive priority access to a vaccine. We are yet to receive a response that addresses this request.

The CEPU does not support mandatory vaccinations and we welcome Australia Post’s confirmation that they are not mandating them. **However, we do strongly encourage members, based on current health advice, to get vaccinated – and it is critical that members who have put themselves and their loved ones at risk throughout this pandemic are not prevented for a second longer from receiving a vaccine, should they desire one.**

In some jurisdictions, adults under the age of 60 can now access an AstraZeneca vaccination, after consulting with a doctor or vaccination provider about their suitability – **and those members residing in those jurisdictions, who wish to be vaccinated as soon as possible, should seek out this consultation.**

However, it cannot be ignored that there is a genuine hesitancy within our communities towards the AstraZeneca vaccination. Whilst we cannot provide medical advice, that hesitancy, whether baseless or not, is threatening the ability for the people in certain jurisdictions to overcome their government’s failures in managing outbreaks.

That’s why we have written again to Minister Hunt, along with the NSW Premier, calling for urgent priority access for our members to the Pfizer vaccine – a plea which continues to be ignored.

Members in our industries are zig-zagging across cities, in and out of ‘red zones’, in close contact with the public and are getting caught up in more and more exposure situations in the course of their duties – putting themselves, their families, the communities they serve and the communities they live in at unnecessary additional risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Our members are on the front-line of this pandemic – keeping our communities connected and enabling business to engage in the booming online economy.

It’s time for the government to recognise this and to stop playing politics with this pandemic. If the only obstacle to vaccination is Pfizer eligibility, **then make them eligible, now!**

Should you require any further information, please your State Branch Official for assistance.

Yours faithfully and please keep safe,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Townsend', written in a cursive style.

Nick Townsend
BRANCH SECRETARY