



Australian Education Union

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Today the South Australian Branches of the Australian Education Union and the Independent Education Union renew calls for priority access to COVID-19 vaccinations for all education staff.

Teachers, leaders and support staff are employed in primary, secondary and special schools and the early childhood, TAFE and in health, correctional and disability services staff across South Australia. They have a collective exposure to a huge proportion of the community and their work is critical to the functioning of society.

In Tasmania, all staff working in schools and Child and Family Centres, irrespective of age, are now able to access a COVID-19 vaccination and all school staff under the age of 50 are now able to book in for a Pfizer vaccination. The AEU and IEU applaud the Tasmanian Government's recognition of the importance of education staff to society.

Earlier this year, the AEU and IEU wrote to the federal and state health ministers seeking for all education workers in schools, kindergartens, TAFE and disability services to be considered a priority group for the COVID-19 vaccination. Prioritising educators for vaccination would be an effective way to reduce the disruptions that inevitably arise during periods of lockdown. Unfortunately, other than in Tasmania, there has been no decision to prioritise the vaccination of education workers.

Educators recognise that the immediate priority for vaccination needed to be workers in frontline health care, aged care, disability care and quarantine and border facilities.

Quotes attributable to Branch President of the AEU (SA Branch) Lara Golding:

"Priority access to vaccines should now be given to educators due to their high level of collective exposure to millions of children and parents within the Australian community every day. Previous lockdowns have demonstrated that preschools and schools are critically important to society, the economy and the nation's future prospects. All staff who work in education settings in South Australia should have access to their age-appropriate vaccine now."

"Premier Marshall should follow the lead of the Tasmanian Government and grant all educators access to the COVID-19 vaccination now."

"In addition, to ensure a high take-up rate of currently available vaccinations, the Marshall Government should allow education staff to access the vaccine during work hours."

Quotes attributable to Secretary of the IEU (SA Branch) Glen Seidel:

"Schools are unique environments where people of all ages and backgrounds interact at close quarters for extended periods. Transmission of COVID is likely to be rampant if it takes hold. The upside however is that a vaccination program which goes from school to school is likely to have a better coverage rate with less disruption than if

currently eligible people are left to their own piecemeal arrangements. School communities are well contained and accessible.”

“We have the ideal opportunity to ensure the continuity of student learning by minimising the risk of school shut-downs whilst minimising economic disruption due to disruption of care givers’ employment.”

“It is time for the Marshall government to shore up our schools as a priority.”

For further information, please contact:

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