



MEDIA RELEASE

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VTA concerned with short vaccination mandate notice for freight industry

The Victorian Government has announced evidence of a COVID-19 vaccination will be required by transport workers from New South Wales that have a specified worker (multiple entry) permit to carry freight into Victoria. Operators and their drivers have been given until Thursday, 23 September to have had at least a first jab of an approved vaccine, providing just two weeks' notice for this vital cohort of the transport industry to get vaccinated.

"The Victorian Transport Association [anticipated vaccinations would be required](#) for interstate transport workers to enter Victoria last week, outlining a series of steps the Victorian Government should take to help our industry get access to vaccines," said VTA CEO Peter Anderson. "These included prioritising road transport workers as essential for vaccination, introducing vaccination hubs at COVID testing sites, truck rest stops and locations drivers frequent while carrying out their work, and rewarding vaccinated drivers with less onerous COVID testing.

"Providing two weeks' notice for these transport workers to obtain a first vaccination is just not good enough and shows a massive disrespect by the government to the people who provide a vital service to the Victorian community. It provides no recognition of the challenges drivers who regularly travel in and out of COVID hotspots face when it comes to getting vaccinated and even seeking basic medical attention," Anderson said.

"Despite numerous meetings and conversations with the government where we outlined a common-sense path towards mandatory vaccinations – should that be the direction taken – we are extremely disappointed our advice was mostly ignored and not acknowledged in the process."

Interstate freight workers have navigated new and changing COVID regulations for over 18 months since the pandemic began including pathology COVID surveillance testing every three days, updating employer letters proving their identity and specific worker permit entitlement under threat of fines for getting it wrong, turn backs from medical facilities for vaccines and health checks once their profession has been established, community isolation as a condition of carrying out their essential work, and the inconvenience and emotional and mental health challenges of being away from family for days on end.

"There is also the risk such short notice presents of the [supply chain disruptions our industry has warned of for weeks](#). Consumers in Victoria and around Australia should not be surprised with shortages of fresh food, groceries, medicine and other goods as a direct consequence of insufficient notice of yet another new requirement," Anderson said.

"Just as the transport industry has complied with every rule and regulation introduced, we will do our very best to meet with this new requirement. The VTA will continue to advocate for members and the freight and logistics industry, whilst strongly encouraging governments to do more to help transport workers get vaccinated."

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