



**Australian
Nursing &
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Federation**
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20 August 2020

The Hon Jill Hennessy
Attorney-General
Minister for Workplace Safety
Minister for the Co-ordination of Justice and Community Safety: COVID-19
Level 26 / 121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Email: jill.hennessy@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Dear Attorney-General

Presumptive legislation for healthcare workers relating to COVID-19

As you are aware, at this time of crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses, midwives and personal care workers are at the frontline of ensuring the health of those in our community who contract this virus. This puts our members and their families, at a significantly increased risk of contracting the virus, simply by undertaking their daily duties to treat and care for Victorians.

Over recent weeks, the number of healthcare workers contracting COVID-19 has increased significantly, whilst we understand that the number of WorkCover claims made as a result of this, have not increased proportionately. There may be many reasons for this, but the fear of having to navigate the sometimes oppositional WorkCover system - at a time when they are ill and concerned about their own welfare and that of their family - we believe, is one of those barriers.

Consequently, ANMF (Vic Branch) is seeking on behalf of our members, that all nurses, midwives and personal care workers who have contracted COVID-19 are able to access the WorkCover system through the process of COVID-19 being a proclaimed disease for health care workers. This would remove one of the significant barriers and would allow easier access to workers' compensation entitlements through the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*. It would also assist in reducing any stigma associated with contracting COVID-19.

Importantly, a successful and uncontested claim will provide protection for Victoria's nursing, midwifery and personal carer workforce into the future, given we know so little at this stage of side effects (if any). Providing straightforward access to weekly payments of compensation, and payment of reasonable medical and like expenses while they recover from COVID-19, is critical to relieving some of the stressors experienced by our members who have contracted the virus. The ANMF (Vic

Branch) believes that a safety net for those nurses, midwives and personal care workers who may suffer long term injury, is critical.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and would welcome any opportunity to speak with you in relation to this matter.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Fitzpatrick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Fitzpatrick
Secretary
ANMF (Vic Branch)

CC: Records