



**Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation**
VICTORIAN BRANCH

Newsflash

COVID-19 information for aged care members

Tuesday 1 June 2021

Coronavirus update **Vaccination blitz for private aged care staff**

Vaccination fast-lane for private aged care workers – five-day blitz

Private aged care workers, including nurses and personal care workers will be given priority access to 10 Victorian Government vaccination centres across Victoria from Wednesday 2 June.

From Wednesday 2 June to Sunday 6 June (inclusive), workers in private aged care facilities and the residential disability sector will be given priority access at walk-in vaccination hubs around Victoria between 9am and 4pm when they present evidence of their employment.

The blitz has been organised in response to the Federal Government's minimal in-reach vaccination rate in private aged care and increased community transmission which has included two private aged care workers and a resident.

Aged care staff are eligible for either the Pfizer (49 years and younger) or AstraZeneca (50 years and older) vaccines depending on their age. The following vaccination centres are participating in the five-day blitz:

- Royal Exhibition Building
- Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)
- Sandown Racecourse
- Melbourne Showgrounds
- Former Ford Factory – Geelong
- Bendigo Community Clinic
- Ballarat Mercure Hotel and Convention Centre
- Shepparton Showgrounds – McIntosh Centre

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) offices:

Ballarat Bendigo Geelong Melbourne Morwell Shepparton Swan Hill Wangaratta Warrnambool

- Traralgon Racecourse
- Wodonga Vaccination Hub

The sites above will have priority walk-in access and bookings will not be required.

Private aged care staff are still eligible to attend all other vaccination centres or their GP but if it is not one of the 10 centres named above, they will need to go through the general booking process.

In announcing the blitz on 1 June 2021, Victorian Health Minister Martin Foley said, ‘Victorians have come out in force to get vaccinated in the past week – now we’re stepping in to make sure those who work in our most vulnerable settings have priority access to a vaccine to protect our most at-risk groups.’

Vaccination centre location information <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccination-centres>
Read the Victorian Government media release ‘Vaccination blitz to keep vulnerable settings safe’
<https://bit.ly/3z0sqzR>

Information about the vaccines

Free COVID-19 vaccine webinar: Senior Medical Advisor, Executive Director, COVID-19 Immunisation Program, Department of Health, Professor Ben Cowie, Chair, Collaboration on Social Science and Immunisation, Associate Professor Margie Danchin and Nurse Unit Manager, Infectious diseases nurse, COVID-19 ward, Royal Melbourne Hospital Grace Carroll are presenting a free webinar for healthcare workers on COVID-19 vaccines next Thursday 10 June from 11am--midday.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/3p4ZnGE>

If you want to read more information about the vaccines, the following links are recommended:

1. ‘Why we decided to put Pfizer vaccine ahead of AstraZeneca for under-50s’, by Professor Allen Cheng (*The Age*, 9 April 2021) <https://bit.ly/3f1BW8N>
2. Federal Government information about the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine <https://bit.ly/3eAGztR>
3. Federal Government information about the Pfizer vaccine <https://bit.ly/32Vry0w>
4. What happens after I am vaccinated? <https://bit.ly/3hTYI9u>
5. Australian Academy of Science – COVID-19 facts hub <https://bit.ly/3hXgl2C>
6. Therapeutic Goods Administration - <https://bit.ly/3uli9up>
7. World Health Organisation – vaccines explained <https://bit.ly/3vr6jjQ>
8. National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance <https://bit.ly/2QT6nK7>
9. Australian Government translated information about COVID-19 vaccines <https://bit.ly/3qRfEyc>

Mandatory vaccination – what is ANMF’s position?

ANMF is concerned that the Morrison Government is using the debate about making vaccination mandatory as a way to blame aged care workers for the failures of its own vaccine program which focused on residents.

The Morrison Government made aged care workers a priority 1a vaccination group, but then told them to organise their own vaccination or gave them resident vaccination leftovers.

ANMF is supportive of vaccination, but we do not support punitive measures as effective means to promote vaccination.

We support all direct care workers being vaccinated (subject to any recognised medical exclusions).

While the ‘gold standard’ is that workers should not be exposed to infectious diseases at work, this is not always possible to achieve. Hence vaccination is critical to ensure both a safe workplace for nurses and personal care workers, and for those in their care.

ANMF supports all direct care workers being vaccinated against COVID-19 (subject to any recognised medical exclusions). Vaccination protects the health of nurses and carers and their residents from severe symptoms and death.

ANMF has been strongly lobbying the Morrison Government that it is vitally important employees are supported to achieve full vaccination and in circumstances where full vaccination is not possible, that an employee is not disadvantaged.

For more information read the federal ANMF *Vaccination and immunisation policy* via <https://bit.ly/3yUaJ4E>

Is vaccination mandatory in public sector aged care?

ANMF understands vaccination is mandatory for all hotel quarantine workers.

It is strongly recommended for public sector nurses and midwives, but it is not mandatory at this stage.

It is open to a health service to redeploy an employee or mandate a different level of personal protective equipment for that employee if that employee is not vaccinated and therefore is at greater risk.

It may also be appropriate for unvaccinated staff to be redeployed to lower exposure parts of a health service.

Fill out the ANMF vaccine survey – private aged care only

Please complete the ANMF's private aged care vaccine survey. This will support ANMF's advocacy on your behalf to ensure the Federal Government provides equitable access and prioritisation of the vaccine rollout for aged care nurses and personal care workers.

Take the survey here <https://anmfvic.asn.au/vaccsurv2>

Single-site employment update

The Federal Government's single-site employment arrangements and funding are in place for 31 local government areas in Greater Melbourne until 10 June 2021.

Single-site employment continues in place in state-run public aged care and will be revised on 30 June.

To understand the arrangements and the impact on members and how ANMF can assist and support members please read the 28 May 2021 COVID-19 update via <https://bit.ly/3uFmdpC>

ANMF advocacy for members

ANMF staff and elected officials continue to liaise and advocate on behalf of members to ensure aged care nurses and personal care workers are supported and protected. ANMF is in talks with the Morrison Government and private aged care providers.

ANMF is urgently seeking from the Morrison Government:

1. Transparency – the Morrison Government must provide the actual national and Victorian numbers of aged care staff and residents who have had one, two or no vaccine.
2. Extend the current single-site arrangements beyond 10 June to give aged care staff and providers certainty over rosters and funding, particularly when vaccination rates are below 70 per cent.

3. To urgently review when single-site arrangements are implemented so that the policy is more proactive, rather than reactive to an outbreak.
4. To urgently report on the implementation of the Infection Control Lead Prevention positions, funding and completion of education in every private aged care facility.
5. To commit to providing up to two days special paid leave for each vaccination dose to those private aged care workers who become unwell after receiving their immunisation. This is consistent with what the Andrews Government is providing for its public sector workforce.
6. To urgently roll out fit testing of respirator masks in private aged care in a program similar to the Victorian public health services.

Fit testing involves staff testing different respirators to confirm which type is the most appropriate fit for their face shape and provides the best seal. This process requires an appropriately skilled person and a specialist fit testing machine and takes between 45 and 90 minutes for each staff member.

Where can I get tested for COVID-19?

Please get tested even with the slightest of symptoms.

To find where to get tested, check the Department of Health Coronavirus website for a map of testing sites:

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/where-get-tested-covid-19>

Exposure site tiers explained

Tier 1 exposure sites

Anyone who has visited a Tier 1 exposure site during the times listed must immediately isolate, get a coronavirus (COVID-19) test, and quarantine for 14 days from the date of exposure. You should also contact the Department of Health at 1300 651 160.

Tier 2 exposure sites

Anyone who has visited a Tier 2 exposure site during times listed should urgently get a test and isolate until they receive a negative result. You should also contact the Department of Health at 1300 651 160.

Tier 3 exposure sites

Anyone who has visited a Tier 3 exposure site during times listed should monitor for symptoms - If symptoms develop, immediately get tested and isolate until you receive a negative result.

To find a testing location visit <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/where-get-tested-covid-19>

How to access ANMF support

ANMF is here to support our members in aged care during this challenging period. Representation and advice are available.

For general inquiries members are encouraged to complete an online Member Assistance inquiry form via <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance>

If you feel that you are being disadvantaged by single site employment direction, please contact ANMF via this form: anmfvic.asn.au/dualemployment.

Personal protective equipment concern?

Members with concerns about PPE access, supply or level should:

1. **raise and submit OHS incident reports with your employer** as well as speaking directly with your manager
2. **involve your Health and Safety Rep** if you have one
3. contact ANMF via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance (include your report and response if applicable) for further support and advice if after you have raised your concerns they are not addressed by your employer.

\$450 test and isolation payment

The Victorian Government provides a \$450 test and isolation payment to workers required to isolate after taking a COVID-19 test who don't have access to paid leave. This is for private aged care workers too.

More information, eligibility, and applications <https://bit.ly/3fWygqQ>

\$1500 disaster leave payment

The Federal Government provides a \$1500 disaster leave payment if you tested positive or were identified as a close contact and have to isolate for 14 days. Private aged care workers are eligible for the payment if you do not have access to paid leave during your isolation period.

Call 180 22 66 to make a claim.

More information, eligibility, and applications <https://bit.ly/3bWnfXG>

Emergency accommodation for healthcare workers

The Victorian Government provides the 'frontline accommodation program' for health care workers if they need support to quarantine or isolate safely.

Private aged care nurses and personal care workers are eligible to access this program.

For details <https://bit.ly/2X6cABJ>

Got a colleague not receiving ANMF emails?

If you have an ANMF colleague who is not receiving these newsflash emails, please pass this on and let them know they can re-subscribe via anmfvic.asn.au/resubscribe

Encourage your colleagues to join ANMF

Please invite your aged care nursing and personal care worker colleagues to join their union so they have access to support, advice and information about their employment. Let them know they can join via anmfvic.asn.au/join