



**Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation**
VICTORIAN BRANCH

ANMF House
535 Elizabeth Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
ABN 80 571 091 192
Box 12600 A'Beckett Street PO
Melbourne Victoria 8006

anmfvic.asn.au
t 03 9275 9333
f 03 9275 9344
e records@anmfvic.asn.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Morrison Government fails nurses

The Victorian union for nurses, midwives and personal care workers is calling on the Federal Morrison Government to urgently ask the Andrews Government to take on the vaccination program for the Commonwealth's phase 1a private aged care workforce.

In a survey over the Easter long weekend 86 per cent of Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Vic Branch) private aged care members – nurses and personal care workers – said they had not received a vaccination.

Of those who had been vaccinated, most had grown tired of waiting for the promise of a workplace vaccination and arranged their own vaccination through their private GP.

The Morrison Government, which is responsible for the vaccination of private aged care residents and staff, across the country originally planned to contract agencies to vaccinate residents and staff in the nursing homes.

On 26 March the federal Department of Health published an [aged care COVID-19 update](#) advising the private residential aged care workforce to organise their own vaccination through a GP respiratory clinic or a GP clinic – where appointments are subject to vaccine availability. Aged care workers were also told they would be able to book into a dedicated aged care worker clinic from early April. Booking details are not yet available.

Meanwhile the Victorian Andrews Government, which is responsible for the vaccination of public aged care residents and staff, is using an effective combination of outreach services and hospital and vaccination hubs. The vast majority of the state's public aged care workforce has been vaccinated with many having received their second dose.

Last year in Victoria almost 2000 private residential aged care residents contracted COVID-19 and 655 of those residents died. There were three resident COVID-19 cases in Victoria's state-run public aged care and no deaths.

ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary Lisa Fitzpatrick said 'The Morrison Government must prioritise vaccination of private aged care staff at work given the hundreds of resident deaths in this sector last year.

'Their hands-off approach ignores the brutal aged care lessons we learned during last year's COVID-19 outbreak.

'By outsourcing their responsibility under the guise of choice, the Morrison Government has abandoned private aged care nurses, personal care workers and other staff.

'They saw Prime Minister Scott Morrison receive his vaccination seven weeks ago and thought the government cared about them because they were included in the most at-risk phase 1a category,' she said.

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) offices:

Ballarat Bendigo Geelong Melbourne Morwell Shepparton Swan Hill Wangaratta Warrnambool

'For staff to be told to organise their own vaccination makes a mockery of their importance as a 1a priority cohort.

'The revised AstraZeneca advice will impact supplies and logistics making it even more important for the Morrison Government to fund the state government to deliver the vaccine to this critical workforce.

'Effective mass vaccination of this workforce means it must be convenient and the Andrews Government has proven it is willing and capable of organising mass vaccinations,' Ms Fitzpatrick said.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) has more than 93,000 members – nurses, midwives and aged care personal care workers – across the Victorian health, mental health and aged care sectors.

Media inquiries: ANMF (Vic Branch) Robyn Asbury – M: 0417 523 252