

Victorian Premier announces mandatory vaccinations for all Authorised Workers

The Victorian Premier has today [announced](#) that on the advice of his public health team, and its apparent concerns over the capacity of the Victorian health system to cope with an increase in admissions due to COVID-19, that:

“all workers – in Melbourne and Regional Victoria – on the Authorised Workers list will require their first COVID-19 vaccine dose by Friday, 15 October in order to continue working onsite. They will need to be full vaccinated by 26 November.”

Members are reminded that the following automotive industry businesses are **Authorised Providers and Workers**, with the full Authorised Providers and Workers List available [here](#):

- Petrol stations, including a petrol station that sells groceries
- Vehicle and mechanical repair services
- Contactless ‘Click and collect/deliver’ services
- Emergency repair workers
- Roadside assistance services
- Ancillary and support businesses, where necessary for the operations of an authorised provider
- Administrative services provided by an employer to enable its employees to work from home – e.g. payroll and IT services
- Truck stops and roadhouses, but not the provision of seated dining or shower facilities to persons who are not transport, freight or logistics drivers.

VACC will update members with further details once the Directions have been issued under the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008** by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. VACC understands that this is likely to take the form of an update to the current **COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Directions (No. 4)** and the **COVID-19 Vaccinated Activities Directions** – which currently have application in some industries.

Accordingly, VACC understands that these updated Directions will provide the specific details on how the COVID-19 vaccination requirements will apply, including in relation to:

- Employee notification requirements
- Collection of vaccination information
- Reasonable steps to prevent entry of unvaccinated workers
- Exemptions and Exceptions
- Disclosure obligations to Authorised Officers

VACC will update members with the details once available, together with guidance material to assist members through the process – including strategies to assist where an employee refuses to comply with the Directions. In the interim, members should note that aside from any moral, ethical and public policy concerns they may have, the Victorian Premier’s decision to mandate vaccinations for Authorised Workers **resolves** a number of issues for employers. In particular, it enables an employer to issue a **lawful and reasonable** direction to an affected employee to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status and to be vaccinated (unless a valid exemption or exception applies), in order to work onsite.

COVID-19 Disaster Payment to end following 80% COVID-19 vaccination target reached

On 29 September 2021, the Australian Government **announced** that the current COVID-19 Disaster Payment will be phased out. Under current arrangements, eligible recipients receive \$750 per week if they lose over 20 hours of work, and \$450 per week if they lost between 8 and 20 hours per week.

Under the phase out arrangements, once Victoria reaches its **70% COVID-19 vaccination target** (expected under current Victorian ‘Roadmap’ around 26 October 2021) – the automatic renewal of the payment will end, and the individual will need to **reapply each week** to confirm their continuing eligibility.

Once the **80% COVID-19 vaccination target** is reached (expected under current Victorian ‘Roadmap’ around 5 November 2021), the payment will reduce to a flat **\$450 in Week 1** for eligible recipients who have lost more than 8 hours work - with the payment reducing to a **\$320 in Week 2**, before ending.

COVID-19 Business Support to end once 80% vaccination target reached

On 30 September 2021, the Australian and Victorian Governments jointly **announced** that a jointly-funded package of grants would continue until the **80% COVID-19 vaccination target** is reached.

As a result, those businesses that are currently eligible under Business Costs Assistance Program will continue to receive automatic grants of \$1,000 to \$8,400 per week (based on payroll) until the end of October. Businesses that remain closed or severely restricted over the first two weeks of November will also receive automatic payment for that period – before the Program ends.

The announced package will also enable a **further 30,000 businesses** to receive a **one-off \$20,000** payment through the **Small Business COVID Hardship Fund**. Details on the specific eligibility requirements have not yet been released, but will be announced through [Business Victoria](#) once available.

VACC will continue to keep members advised of developments. Members needing further advice or assistance are encouraged to contact VACC’s Workplace Relations team on 03 9829 1123 or ir@vacc.com.au.

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