



WASTE CONTRACTORS &
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WCRA's statement on vaccination

The COVID-19 virus is the cause of much suffering by communities across all of Australia. This has led to major adverse health issues, along with significant negative impacts on our economy, on business operations and on our workers.

The waste management and recycling sector (collections, facilities and workers) have also been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and the downside that comes with exposure, lockdowns and the many other restrictions that vary across all Australian jurisdictions.

Our industry has long shown leadership on workplace health issues.

For example, many waste & recycling yards have long mandated that all workers will require tetanus and hepatitis B injections.

And in another example, waste & recycling transport yards were amongst the first workplaces to mandate systematic policies and procedures for drug & alcohol testing.

And it is now time for the waste management and recycling sector to show leadership on the issue of vaccination for our workers and contractors.

Employers and business operators have a general duty of care under our modern, nationally harmonised WHS laws to provide a safe workplace. And this means that they have an obligation to start the conversation with a draft policy on mandatory vaccination by conducting meaningful workplace consultation on this most important subject.

In recent days, NSW Public Health Orders state that Authorised Workers who work outside their local government area are only permitted to work if rapid antigen testing is implemented at their worksite, or they have had their first vaccination dose by 30 August 2021.

The simple facts are:-

- That vaccinated workers are safer and are at less risk and more productive than sick workers or workers that are not fit for work.
- Vaccination is the most effective way to protect against and reduce the effects of infectious diseases.
- Healthy workplaces keep employees at work and lead to enhanced business reputation and to a better bottom line.
- Having fully vaccinated workers in our waste management and recycling workplaces will lead to better productivity and fewer workplace restrictions.

- It will allow our industry to continue to provide essential and critical collection, processing and disposal services.
- The overwhelming view of medical experts is that vaccination is the best pathway forward.

Getting vaccinated will be more effective when everybody that can, does it together. It is a team play and here are the views of several workers from across the industry -:

- John is a side lift driver on a domestic contract in central western NSW “I plan to be vaccinated and will be getting my first AZ jab on Friday. I want to be fully vaccinated, so that I can live a normal family life, which includes kids’ sports”
- Shirley works at a recycling facility in south-western Sydney “the job allows me to work safely and to earn a living”
- Mark is a commercial rear lift driver in the Sydney area “I have had my first shot and the second is in three weeks. I want life to go back to normal, so that my Dad who lives on his own can visit his grandkids”
- Nathan is a driver / operator on the Parramatta route “I had the JAB for the second time last week, no dramas bit of a sore arm but that went in a day or so. I feel a lot safer now I am full vaccinated”
- Ben works in sales in western Sydney “waste is an essential industry and by being vaccinated, I can do my job safely, which includes client & site visits”
- Ros is a member of the WCRA Executive “for me there is no question whether to get vaccinated. It is about future proofing my family, my job and where I work. While it is a personal choice currently, for me to not be vaccinated puts myself and others at greater risk and I’m not prepared to do that”

So, please follow the lead of your co-industry colleagues John, Shirley, Mark, Nathan, Ben and Ros and get the jab.

We believe that vaccination is the pathway back to pre-COVID-19 normality and it is clear that vaccination is the only way to end this cycle of lockdowns and restrictions.

WCRA supports our Members big and small in their endeavours to achieve fully vaccinated workplaces. We support COVID-19 vaccinations, and we encourage all members’ employees and contractors to get vaccinated as promptly as they can.

We have an opportunity as an industry to lead by example, by taking on the responsibility to get ourselves and our workers vaccinated as soon as we possibly can.

For any further comment or information, please contact the undersigned and please stay safe.

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