



17 November 2021

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Dear Sonya and Serene,

Re: **COVID-19 Vaccinations**

I refer to your letter to Tony Walker and Samantha Senn dated 10 November 2021. Your letter contains various assertions about the effectiveness of, and risks associated with, COVID-19 vaccines. It also asserts that it is “unlawful for the injection to be mandated on” Ambulance Victoria’s employees.

As you would be aware, Ambulance Victoria is legally required to comply with both the *COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Specified Facilities) Directions* (which have application to employees working in emergency or non-emergency vehicles) and the *COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Workers) Directions* (which have application to employees who are or may be scheduled to work outside their residence) (**Directions**). This means that all Ambulance Victoria employees are now subject to Directions made under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)* which mandate COVID-19 vaccination. Ambulance Victoria has been communicating regularly with its employees about the Directions and has provided them with all relevant information to ensure they understand their effect.

Your letter asserts that Ambulance Victoria’s “policy” has given rise to “an unacceptable discriminatory culture” and behaviours of serious concern including unvaccinated employees being “branded and harassed”, discriminated against, victimised and bullied. As stated above, Ambulance Victoria is required under the Directions not to permit an unvaccinated worker to attend an AV location; it has not introduced a “policy” to this effect. Ambulance Victoria does not tolerate bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behaviours in its workplaces and takes complaints in respect of such conduct very seriously. Employees are aware that if they are experiencing or have witnessed inappropriate workplace or work-related behaviours then those behaviours can be reported through to AV’s Professional Conduct Unit by email or phone, or by lodging a Formal Complaint Form which is available



on AV's intranet. We also encourage employees who are experiencing difficulties with this issue to access AV's Wellbeing and Support Services.

You have also alleged that Ambulance Victoria's employees are being "severely pressured and harassed to identify their vaccination status, despite this running counter to very clear privacy laws". Under the Directions, Ambulance Victoria is required to collect, record, and hold vaccination information about its employees. Ambulance Victoria has advised its employees of this requirement. Employees have not been "severely pressured and harassed" to provide this information. As you would be aware, under the Australian Privacy Principles in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), an individual's consent is not required in respect of the collection of their sensitive information if the collection of the information is required or authorised by or under an Australian law.

Your claim regarding a proposal to deny unvaccinated employees access to their leave entitlements is without foundation.

You have requested a meeting with Ambulance Victoria, to be attended by your top medical experts. Your request is declined on the basis that it is unnecessary. If any Ambulance Victoria employees wish to raise particular concerns or issues, it remains the case that it is open to them to do so.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Hodges
Executive Director, People & Culture

