

Teachers must get higher priority in vaccine roll-out

April 16, 2021

Federation has continued to pursue the interests of members regarding the roll out of the Covid 19 vaccine since August last year. This has included representations to the Federal Health Minister, NSW Minister for Education and alongside our colleagues at Unions NSW and the ACTU and AEU nationally.

While Federation understands and supports that the immediate government priority for the COVID-19 vaccinations is for workers in frontline health care, aged care, disability care, and quarantine and border facilities, the roll-out strategy's identification of "critical and high-risk workers" must ensure that teachers and principals in schools be placed in the higher priority groups, given their critical role to societal functioning.

Teachers working in frontline priority health, disability care and correctional services must be afforded the same priority as those same workers in other environments. Our members in hospital schools, specialist settings and Education Training Units (ETU) etc must be aligned with those phases of the roll-out strategy.



Further, teachers must be identified as a priority group in the national roll-out of the vaccine given their collective exposure within the community each day and the need to protect our teachers and the ongoing essential service of public education for our students.

Last year, we saw the extraordinary disruption caused by school outbreaks and closures and the government's insistence that public schools remain operating at great cost to our members, their families and the society more broadly.

To reduce the risk of such repeated occurrences and the associated impact on our members, consistent with the United Nations identification of teachers as "essential workers" and the Federal Government's vaccination objectives, teachers must be elevated to phases where "critical and high risk" workers are situated.

Given our students under 18 are not recommended to receive the COVID vaccine in the current roll-out strategy, ensuring the health and safety of all our teachers, students and public school communities will be maximised by teachers being vaccinated as a priority.

Recent media by Federation on this matter can be [seen here](#) (1min 26seconds in).