

Submission to the COVID-19 Response Inquiry 2023

My name is [REDACTED] I am a senior operational manager in the community sector with a 25 year career in health and community services sectors serving vulnerable people. I was working as an [REDACTED] in the health sector when the pandemic started and I worked through the whole of 2020 both in the office and for periods at home. I was part of the pandemic response team at work serving various roles in Incident Command for [REDACTED]. I was vaccinated in September 2021 and unfortunately had a severe reaction to the AstraZeneca dose that required overnight hospitalization due to [REDACTED]. Thankfully my condition improved but I had ongoing symptoms related to my [REDACTED]. Despite ongoing symptoms everyday as I was unable to be diagnosed and I did not meet the limited ATAGI exemption guidelines. Even though I was still sick with a mystery illness I was forced to get another vaccine to keep my job- nausea is specifically mentioned as **not being eligible** in the extended guideline for vaccine injuries. After a second dose I became much worse, [REDACTED]. Still four GP's could not work out what was wrong with me and I was still so sick everyday. When the definition of fully vaccinated was changed to three doses, I was still unable to get an exemption and I had to prioritise my health- I was sacked. The effect on my mental health was massive: A career of service, injured by a workplace direction, and then sacked- due to previously managed [REDACTED] I developed [REDACTED]

It took nearly 12 months to find out what was wrong with me- a condition called [REDACTED] My new Dr had a special interest in the area- or never would have been diagnosed. He informed me that this a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that was triggered by the shock to my body caused by the vaccine, and because it wasn't cured with [REDACTED] the second vaccine worsened the condition due to the additional stress to my body. He recommend I didn't have any more covid vaccines but had no provision in the ATAGI Guidelines to provide me an exemption. He was the 5th GP to tell me this since the first serious adverse reaction.

This has led me to understand very keenly that the ATAGI guidelines are too narrow and do not allow for conditions like mine to be able to be provided with proper care. To add further insult to injury, I was not eligible for compensation! The tight eligibility in the guidelines for the Government Vaccine Compensation Scheme also locked me out!

I wrote to every politician could think of- on both sides of politics, to let them know this terrible injustice was happening- THEY IGNORED ME! No one would meet with me. Senator Gerard Rennick was the only one that seemed to care but there is not much he can do- as the consensus among politicians seems to be to ignore and berate the victims of these measures. I fell through the cracks... I went mad for a year... I'm still rebuilding my life.

I suffered the following systemic abuse due to poor vaccine exemption scheme and have experienced this to be clinically unethical eligibility:

- I was injured by a workplace direction and then abused by the system- sacked! This is a cruel and inhumane approach.
- I was injured by two different vaccines. However, I found I was not eligible for a medical exemption or compensation, even though I was still sick. I was to try a third type! This was not even clinically appropriate!
- I was then sacked, **even though I worked from home at the time.**

- After all of that trauma, it took me 12 months (self funded and Centrelink) to find a job because even though I'm double vaccinated I was ineligible for most jobs due to requirements for 'fully vaccinated'. I was also not performing too well in interviews due to my poor mental health.
- I was not eligible for compensation- I've also had to cover all my own significant medical costs.
- I experienced stigma and discrimination that continues to this day when I tell my story!

I have medical records to support my story and really hope that someone will listen this time. Feel free to look me up on Linked In to see my career which was leveled.

Please see below for details to help the inquiry in regard to statements.

Due to not fitting the definition of FULLY VACCINATED I suffer discrimination due to industry (Health, Aged Care, Disability, Vic/local Government) vaccination requirements:

- Health and adjacent sectors are expected to keep the vaccine requirements via OH&S law- I can hardly work anywhere now, even though I'm double vaccinated- how can we say that one more is fully vaccinated, when the efficacy of the vaccines is known to wane quickly.
- I cannot work in State Government jobs due to requirements even though it is my right under Victoria Charter of Human Rights.
- It took me 12 months (self funded and Centrelink) to find a job because even though I'm double vaccinated I was ineligible for most jobs due to requirements for 'fully vaccinated'- so I was not only changing sectors which would have been hard enough but locked out generally!
- *The booster mandate by definition, only sacked people who were double vaccinated- right before the worst wave of covid- none of these people could be described as being against the vaccine*
- I worked in health for over [REDACTED] at the time from home but was still sacked as part of company policy- they will now enshrine this in their employment contracts locking people like me out forever
- I did not work at the front line- I was a [REDACTED]
- I've been incredibly careful and I've never had covid- this makes the whole situation sadder- my career destroyed, my health destroyed... for nothing
- Politicians have dehumanized and encouraged discrimination to those who are not vaccinated- their own people- We would never allow this discrimination to happen to any other group
- ***Politicians say they are doing this because they care about their people but my case shows that they don't!***

More information on politicians and their staff dismissing me and doing nothing to help

- *I emailed as many as I could just before I was sacked over the booster mandate- none of them have done anything!*
 - some even specifically noted that they supported the decisions and policies that were destroying my life and health... very insensitive responses that broke my heart at the time.
 - Their responses have been insensitive, someone even mentioned that GP's may be reluctant to give exemptions because of 'anti vaxxers', as if this were an excuse, minimising the situation and not looking at the facts of the exemption criteria!

- I've noted casual discrimination, questioning my story as if I'm making it up or trying to deliberately cause vaccine hesitancy - imagine if you could not get adequate medical care and your government supported the situation, then turned on you like you were an enemy! My faith in God is the only reason I'm alive.

I support this inquiry into the Covid measures but believe there needs to be a Royal Commission.

I hope this inquiry will address:

1. **The lack of medical exemption options for people with significant reactions and/or ongoing injuries who can not get an exemption or cannot to gain an exemption permanently-** this should be easy, as the mental health impact of an injury is significant... we shouldn't be expected to go get another dose... this is extremely traumatic. It will get these people back to work
2. **Allow sacked partially vaccinated workers back to work and,**
3. **Remove these requirements validity in OH&S law-** allow all sacked health workers to go back to work
4. **Fully dismantle the two-tier society enabled by 'fully vaccinated' requirements** allowing the unvaccinated to have equal opportunity
5. **Actively discourage discrimination of all kinds-** if we allow one type of discrimination by stealth, we allow them all
6. **Ensure that Human Rights and Freedom of speech are nurtured-** otherwise people will continue to get angrier and angrier- **we need to come back together as a community!**

My Story of Vaccine Injury

My name is [REDACTED] and was a healthy, vibrant, robust, [REDACTED] woman before my vaccinations. I was in the best shape of my life; I worked really hard on keeping my body strong and never got sick with anything more than cold or flu. I enjoyed my job and was looking to purchase my first home. I worked as a [REDACTED] for a large [REDACTED] based not for profit, health organisation. They announced an organisation-wide, mandate across our workforce, whether you were working clinically, back of house or from home, that we had to be fully vaccinated to continue working for them.

As soon as I heard that the government were rolling out vaccines, I had concerns, as I knew that they were in clinical trial stages and that the manufacturers were protected with no recourse if anything happened. I didn't want to catch covid and had some concerns regarding the Delta strain that was being spoken of at the time as my [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] and a [REDACTED], so I convinced myself that it was the right thing to do and to keep my job.

On 6 September 2021, My [REDACTED] and I had the AstraZeneca (AZ) covid vaccine. I had spoken to my GP in the weeks prior and they said that it was safe for me to get vaccinated while recovering from a [REDACTED].

I went home and that evening I started experience quite severe flu like symptoms like hot and cold, run down and fatigued. This continued for 4 days, after which I started to feel better and thought that this was normal post vaccine.

On 12 September, I was walking down the street and out of nowhere was [REDACTED]. It felt like something had [REDACTED]. I managed to get myself home where the [REDACTED] continued and I started to get [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] had come back, but with a vengeance.

I was scared, as the nurses had told me to look out for symptoms after one week having had AZ. I did a telehealth with my GP I could tell right away that she was rattled and told me that if I didn't improve by the next 24 hours to go to Emergency. The next two days were a blur and I spent was in a [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. I could hardly [REDACTED] and had no energy to get out of bed. I did another telehealth with my GP who told me to go straight to Emergency. I went to [REDACTED] which was a covid hotspot at the time. I was told on arrival that if I came in there I would have to isolate for 14 days and that I should go to my GP for tests. I got an uber to my GP Clinic and called on the way. The receptionist told me to come straight in, my Dr would see me right away.

When I arrived, the Dr who did the telehealth ushered me into her office and said, 'we won't do these tests here, you need to go back to ED'. I told her what happened at [REDACTED] which didn't change anything, and she told me to try another hospital. Again, I got an Uber, this time to [REDACTED]. I told the triage nurse what had happened thus far and that I had my AZ vaccine a week earlier and believed that it was the cause of my issues. I sat in ED for over an hour [REDACTED]. When I saw a Dr, the first thing he said to me was "it is good you got AZ, it was definitely the right thing to do" I was holding my [REDACTED] and was that [REDACTED]. I could barely keep my eyes open and thought that was a strange thing to say. He then went on to lecture me that I should not be there and should have had tests at my GP clinic. I remember thinking "I am so sick, why won't anyone HELP ME"! This was just the start of discrimination I experienced from the medical professions.

This experience at ED was horrific, I was treated like a nuisance. I felt so degraded and have never felt so insignificant. I now know what marginalised people feel like. I was sent to the short stay ward where they tried to get [REDACTED] out of me. I was [REDACTED]. It was very difficult for them to take any [REDACTED] it took ages and they had multiple attempts messing my hand up in the process. After they [REDACTED], I went to toilet my body eliminated [REDACTED]. At the same time, I got my [REDACTED] which was not due. I felt like I was going to die.

I was trying to keep it together while waiting. The tests came back and showed the [REDACTED] was positive, which they didn't believe and tested again. Again, they messed around with my hand which was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at this stage trying to get [REDACTED] again. Again, it was [REDACTED]. I believe this meant the [REDACTED] level in my body was higher than normal and suggested I may be at risk of [REDACTED]. I was then admitted to the covid ward in a vacuum sealed "covid cell" on the ward even though I had produced a negative covid test.

I was given [REDACTED] and monitored overnight and woke feeling like my [REDACTED] had cleared a bit. I had spoken with friends on phone and they were praying for me, and had good support over the phone as no visitors were allowed. Doctor said to me the next morning that they were very busy overnight with covid patients and 'people like you'. This was said in such a derogatory way. It was obvious that they were admitting people with vaccination injuries. They ran my tests again, which came back clear, so I was discharged and sent home. Even though I was still feeling [REDACTED], there was no recommendation for follow up.

I went back to the GP clinic but asked for another GP, as I was still so sick with severe [REDACTED]. The GP ordered a [REDACTED] to look at my organs and found an [REDACTED]. He said that would be why I felt so sick and that no other tests were required. The GP was not concerned about my reaction or my [REDACTED] and insisted that it would be safe for me to get the second vaccination, that I could have Pfizer for my next vaccine. I wish I had not trusted him.

The date for my employer was looming and obviously I didn't want it given what had happened after the first. I asked her about an exemption, and he said I was not eligible with my current symptoms as they weren't severe enough. I had to have had a cardiac episode or anaphylaxis to be eligible. He said Pfizer was lower risk of adverse reaction.

So, on this advice and again to keep my job I got my second dose on 15 October 2021 (left arm) in the GP rooms with the GP and nurse present. Again, that evening I experienced flu symptoms, which again lasted 4 days, then went away. After this time, I started to get [REDACTED] all over me and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] continued, getting worse- it felt like my [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I became [REDACTED] to most of my personal products, hair products, mascara, deodorants, hair dye, fake tan, just about everything; I get [REDACTED]. I get [REDACTED] from sun exposure.

I went back to the GP clinic again, for the developing sensitivities and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They did more [REDACTED] which came back all clear. I had an [REDACTED] which showed a lot of [REDACTED] was present, and I was told that I had [REDACTED].

At this point I was trying to work from home and had taken a bit of time off for appointments and because I was too unwell to focus. I was so tired and angry every day as I was having to down-regulate my emotions while working - it wasn't my team's fault so I was putting my smile on and getting on with it, but this took all of my energy to do, I was so depleted. It started affecting my mental health and my ability to deal with complex concepts at work, which would normally come naturally. It was like the gears wouldn't turn in my brain.

Then there was a further direction from my employer that the booster was mandated. I spoke with my boss about what had happened to me and that I could not get an exemption. He agreed that this was totally wrong and spoke to the executive clinical director. He arranged for me to see one of 'our' doctors. I saw him and told him my story to date. He confirmed that I am not eligible for an exemption as I do not fall into the severe category of reactions and that mine are and not significant enough! He said that the Victorian Specialist Immunisation Service (VSIS) where my case should be assessed was overwhelmed with severe cases so he couldn't refer me there either. He said under the ATAGI guidelines I must try Novavax but there was no guarantee it would not make me worse. He also arranged for me to have a [REDACTED]; this had not been suggested before by any other doctors, so he sent me off for that. It came back positive for a [REDACTED].

I was given two types of [REDACTED] that protect the gut lining and felt a bit better over the next week or so. I had gone from [REDACTED] but still daily and still [REDACTED] persisted, as did the [REDACTED]. I could not risk my health again by having a booster. After 4 weeks of these [REDACTED] I went back to my usual GP and did the [REDACTED] again and it was all clear this time. I was really frustrated at this point as I was still sick!

Prior to this appointment I had done my own research on exemptions and using the 'acute' criteria for people who have had adverse Vaccinations reactions. I showed the GP a video that [REDACTED] had done about this. She said 'ok then, I will do an exemption for you and bump you up to the acute

symptom category, but I won't do it now, I will do it after work today". I called the next day as I hadn't heard anything and was told that the GP wanted to see me again. I go in and she told me that she cannot put me into the acute category as my symptoms do not fit there; I am still sick, how can you say I have to get a booster?? She said she didn't know much about gastrointestinal issues but could refer me to *another* doctor who did....

Before I could get in to see this new GP, on 29 March, 2022 I was sacked from my job for not getting my vaccination in time. I had tried desperately to comply with my employer's order and injured because of the compliance and sacked anyway!! Even though I was working from home and they knew the vaccine had made me sick.

I grew up in a family where no one went to university and had a tough upbringing. I worked butt off in life serving the community and now I feel as though I have been marginalised and treated so badly by the government, my employer, and the health care system. It has taken me 5 doctors before I found one who would listen and now feel as though my heart had been ripped out. I was at such a low point and had to wait a month before I could get in to see the next doctor.

When I did, he got me to do a different breath test for [REDACTED]. He thought that my story and symptoms were consistent with this condition and said he has been treating a lot of vaccine injured and had seen a lot of this and was confident he could help me. The test came back positive, and he put me straight on to a [REDACTED] to prepare my [REDACTED] if [REDACTED], with a few weeks break between each. Following each course of [REDACTED] he put me on [REDACTED] which will try to restore the natural function of the gut.

He believes that the [REDACTED] may be causing my [REDACTED] and that the [REDACTED] has come about because my immune system was/is so disregulated due to the vaccine and it does not recognise 'friend or foe'; it attacks healthy bugs and lets bad ones into blood the stream. He has also put me on a [REDACTED] which is helping.

Since my vaccinations I now feel like I have had no control over my body or my life. When I posted things I was experiencing online I received so much hate and had 'friends' making insensitive comments. The leadership in this country supports the discrimination I face and has been dividing us, it is so sad.

To date I now have [REDACTED] which I never had before and have [REDACTED] along with [REDACTED]. Some of my [REDACTED] and my [REDACTED]. I eat 1200 calories per day and exercise gently in an attempt to keep my weight down. I feel like I stink all the time as these conditions give you [REDACTED] I am like a toxic waste dump with all of these toxins in my blood.

I have been seeing counsellor have good family support and good friends who understand this, but have lost so many people through the process, including my relationship. I am not eligible for the compensation scheme as my injuries are not 'severe enough'. The guidelines for exemption and compensation are just too stringent; [REDACTED] issues post Vaccinations are not on the ATAGI reactions form but are in the Pfizer FOI report.

I have spent over [REDACTED] in savings, which was part of my house deposit I have applied for 100's of jobs with no joy until this month- I finally found a job.

