

1. Introduction:

- a. The 50th National Cabinet meeting, a pivotal gathering amid Australia's battle against the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, underscores the nation's collective push for a return to normalcy. A central tenet of this return lies in the ambitious goal of achieving a 70% vaccination rate, serving as the gateway to easing lockdown measures. While this target is driven by the earnest desire to reunite families, restore social interactions, and revitalise businesses, it inadvertently places an immense burden on employers. The pressure to expedite the return to usual operations has led to discussions surrounding mandatory vaccinations—a contentious issue that amplifies the strain on both businesses and the general public.
- b. This introduction sets the stage for an exploration of the implications surrounding the mandated vaccination discourse, delving into the challenges faced by employers and the public alike as they grapple with the urgency of navigating a delicate balance between health, safety, and the desperate need for a return to normalcy.

2. Legality and Health & Safety Concerns:

- a. **Provisionally Approved Vaccines and Unknown Risks:** The National Cabinet's promotion of provisionally approved vaccines during the 50th meeting introduces a critical concern. These vaccines, while intended to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, raise alarm due to their provisional status. The lack of comprehensive, independent testing by the government leaves the risks associated with these vaccines largely unknown. This ambiguity poses a considerable challenge for both employers and employees navigating health and safety obligations in the workplace.
- b. **Ethical Implications in Directing Provisionally Approved Drugs:** The emphasis on achieving a 70% vaccination rate places a weighty responsibility on employers to encourage or mandate vaccination. However, directing employees to receive provisionally approved vaccines without concrete evidence of their safety is ethically problematic. Health and safety laws empower employees to refuse work that poses a risk, yet the encouragement of the prime minister's statement that it is potentially lawful and reasonable an employer mandate employees to take prescription-only, provisionally approved drugs overlooks this fundamental right. This oversight is particularly alarming for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, where the potential risks are amplified, and the ethical responsibility becomes even more pronounced.
- c. These legality and health and safety concerns underscore the ethical and legal dilemmas arising from the hasty promotion of provisionally approved vaccines, especially when applied to vulnerable segments of the population. The need for a nuanced approach that prioritises safety, transparency, and individual autonomy becomes evident in navigating the delicate balance between public health and individual well-being

3. Public Trust and Misinformation:

- a. Public trust is the bedrock of a functional government, and the statements made during the 50th National Cabinet meeting regarding mandatory workplace vaccinations carry significant implications for this trust. As the government advocated for the lawfulness and reasonability of such mandates, the public, in turn, perceived these declarations as gospel truth. This trust in official statements spurred individuals to make decisions under the assumption that the directives were legally and reasonably sound.
- b. However, a critical examination reveals a disconcerting gap between public perception and the actual evidence supporting the lawfulness and reasonability of mandatory workplace

vaccinations. The public's trust in these statements becomes a precarious foundation when there is a lack of substantial proof or legal backing for such directives.

- c. Moreover, the misinformation propagated during the meeting adds another layer of concern. The Prime Minister's assertion that these vaccinations limit transmission, while a hopeful prospect, was not conclusively proven at the time of the statement. This misinformation, whether unintentional or not, can lead to misguided decisions and actions by the public, creating a ripple effect of consequences.
- d. In the intricate web of public trust and information dissemination, it is imperative to scrutinise the accuracy of statements, especially those that carry profound implications for public health and individual rights. The repercussions of misinformation can erode trust, sow confusion, and undermine the very fabric of a society's faith in its governing institutions.

4. Employment Impact:

- a. The aftermath of the 50th National Cabinet meeting on August 23rd wielded profound repercussions on my personal and professional life. Following the meeting, my employer, buoyed by the government's stance on mandatory vaccinations, convened with its directors to deliberate implementing such a policy. At that time, I, as a breastfeeding individual, found myself unable to participate and unable to meet the criteria for a medical exemption, as advised by the government.
- b. Regrettably, this situation led to inadvertent discrimination against me. The government's failure to provide clear guidelines on discriminatory factors related to provisionally approved vaccines left me vulnerable. Subsequently, I faced termination from a job I cherished—a role that not only brought personal fulfilment but also contributed significantly to my family's well-being. Earning \$80,000 annually for working only 27 hours per week, the termination has drastically limited my work prospects.
- c. Currently constrained to working 10 hours a week in a cleaning role, I now earn a mere \$10,000 annually. This substantial reduction in income has far-reaching implications, impacting not only my immediate financial stability but also my long-term career prospects. The decisions made in the wake of the National Cabinet meeting have altered the trajectory of my professional life, leaving me grappling with limited opportunities and an uncertain future.
- d. Adding to the complexity of the situation, the Fair Work Commission's alignment with the Prime Minister's statements further compounds the challenges. The Commission deemed the employer's actions reasonable and justified, placing paramount importance on the Prime Minister's leadership. Despite the lack of a requirement for employers to complete a safety assessment on the risks associated with COVID-19 vaccinations, the decision left me with the weight of navigating a daunting legal process.
- e. The enduring impact of these decisions, from loss of employment to navigating legal complexities, serves as a stark reminder of the profound consequences that unfold when government directives lack the clarity and consideration needed to protect individuals in vulnerable circumstances.

5. Dangers of Provisional Vaccines:

- a. The precarious nature of provisionally approved vaccines, as highlighted by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), raises significant concerns. According to the TGA's own statements, the information available on provisional vaccines underscores the uncertainty surrounding their risks and benefits when compared to other approved prescription medicines.

The TGA explicitly states, "important to be aware that our knowledge of the risks and benefits of these medicines is less certain than other approved prescription medicines."

- b. Furthermore, the TGA candidly acknowledges that all medicines, including vaccines, carry inherent side effects. This acknowledgment is a stark reminder that the potential risks associated with these vaccines are not to be dismissed lightly.
- c. What exacerbates these concerns is the absence of independent testing by the government. The TGA's cautionary language underscores the lack of a comprehensive evaluation of these vaccines before their release to the public. The government's decision to forego independent testing raises critical questions about the reliability of the information provided by vaccine manufacturers. The absence of rigorous scrutiny amplifies the uncertainty surrounding the safety and efficacy of these provisionally approved vaccines.
- d. As a result, the public, myself included, is left grappling with the inherent risks associated with these vaccines, lacking the assurance that comprehensive testing and scrutiny would provide. The ongoing monitoring of information by the TGA serves as an indication that we are essentially navigating uncharted territory with limited certainty about the potential dangers of these provisionally approved vaccines.

6. Conclusion:

- a. In summary, the aftermath of the 50th National Cabinet meeting sheds light on pressing issues surrounding mandatory vaccinations, revealing a landscape fraught with complexities. The pursuit of a 70% vaccination rate, although rooted in the aspiration for normalcy, surfaces legitimate concerns.
- b. The legal and ethical dimensions of mandating provisionally approved vaccines, as underscored by the TGA's cautious statements, unveil a significant void in independent testing by the government. This lapse amplifies uncertainties and places both employers and employees in a precarious situation. The acknowledgment by the TGA of uncertain risks and the ongoing monitoring signals the need for transparency and a robust evaluation process.
- c. Crucially, the erosion of public trust emerges as a consequence of misinformation and the absence of clear guidelines on discriminatory factors. Real-world repercussions, exemplified in personal experiences such as mine, underscore the tangible impact of decisions made without adequate consideration for the diverse needs of the population.
- d. The actions and inactions of the government, particularly the lack of independent testing and clarity in communication, form a critical part of this narrative. The transparency, legal compliance, and nuanced consideration needed for effective governance demand comprehensive testing and scrutiny before implementing policies with widespread ramifications.
- e. Looking ahead, the onus is on our leaders to foster an environment that prioritises clear communication, legal adherence, and an inclusive approach that respects individual rights. Addressing the challenges highlighted in our discussion requires a concerted effort to rebuild public trust, mitigate individual impacts, and pave the way for a more equitable and informed response to the complexities at hand.

Thank you for the opportunity to complete submissions regarding this.
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