

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to put forth my personal story regarding the impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns, restrictions and vaccine mandates whilst providing alternate suggestions for future instances.

## **My Story**

When the mandates were first introduced in September 2021 I was hesitant to take the vaccine. Not long beforehand the Australian Prime Minister at the time of the 'no jab no job' policy enforcement, stated on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2021, only months before, that 'people make their own decisions about their own health and their own bodies. That's why we don't have mandatory vaccination in relation to the general population.' Yet the state government stated that employers required their workers to be vaccinated against COVID 19. At the time of the mandate's implementation co-chair of ATAGI, Dr Christopher Blyth, stated that 'ATAGI has not provided a recommendation for mandates at any time.' However, the Victorian Government commented that it consulted with relevant stakeholders. If ATAGI, a medical body whose exact role it is to provide advice to the medical administration of vaccines in Australia is not informing the government, then who did? I did not feel like the decision to or not to take this drug was completely my own, nor was I filled with confidence that the vaccine being mandated by the government had gone through the proper processes to become available to the public as key stakeholders were being not being consulted and/or ignored. I was also concerned as the manufacturing companies had completed the shortest trials ever on any vaccine. This did not fill me with confidence that it had adequately been safety tested. There was no way that any medical professional could confidently say that the short and long term effects of this drug were known nor could they say that this was safe and effective. I began to research the brands that were available to me and was still not filled with confidence. As I was planning to begin trying to start a family the following year, I was mainly concerned with how these vaccines would impact my fertility and becoming pregnant, how it would impact a developing foetus or how it would impact a breastfeeding infant. Between reading each of the Product Information sheets for the available vaccines Australia had presented, each brand states one, some or all of these comments:

- No data is available on the vaccine's placental transfer or excretion in milk
- It is unknown whether the vaccine is excreted in milk
- Risks to breastfed newborns cannot be excluded
- No adequate and well controlled studies have been completed with pregnant women and are insufficient to inform vaccine associated risks in pregnancy
- There is limited experience and amount of data with the vaccine in pregnant women, or women who became pregnant after receiving the vaccine
- The data is insufficient to inform on vaccine associated risks
- Vaccination with this vaccine is not recommended in pregnancy.

*\*please find the links to the Product Information sheets*

*pi-covid-19-vaccine\_0.pdf (tga.gov.au)*

[COMIRNATY \[Tris/Sucrose Presentation\] \(tga.gov.au\)](#)

*pdf (tga.gov.au)*

This is only looking at the health of myself and my future children through a fertility, pregnancy and lactation lens, this does not include the other concerns I had for my overall health with the other risks mentioned in the Product Information for each individual vaccine. I was deeply concerned about taking any of the COVID 19 vaccines because of this lack of information. I was terrified of

putting my health at risk and even more so risking the chances of becoming pregnant, starting a family of my own and the impact that this one forced decision could have on my children.

I had come to the conclusion that I would not take this experimental drug that seriously lacked safety testing and the data to go with it. I had to prepare myself to lose my career and anything else that might come with that such as losing my house. When I stated that I was not going to be an active participant of the mandate, I felt that I was personally looked down upon and grouped politically as an 'anti-vaxxer' because I wasn't going along with the 'mainstream narrative' calling the vaccine 'safe and effective'. I had to inform my principal of my decision to put my health and safety first, and felt obliged to explain to him my reasons for a personal medical choice. I then had to share this decision with my work colleagues. Upon making my decision known to colleagues I was met with comments and pressures to the effect of 'you're not here to tell me you're not taking the vaccine too are you?', 'go and talk to the doctors about it, they'll know if it's safe' and 'are you really doing this? Are you really not coming back to finish the year because it's a lot to take over someone's class'. Not only was this embarrassing but I felt as though my reputation was in question for a personal, medical decision that had nothing to do with anyone other than myself. I felt isolated and made to feel ashamed of putting myself first. As a [REDACTED] teacher at the time, I was stood down while others worked from home due to the staggered return to school start. It was then clear to my colleagues and school community why I had not returned to work which also made me feel like my views were on display without having to voice them and as if I was being judged on them.

I had given 110% of myself each and every day to the students I taught, the communities I worked within and the colleagues I taught alongside. Yet my abilities and skillset were being thrown out the door because of my personal medical choice, something that had nothing to do with my competencies or professionalism. I felt as though everything I had done to provide a quality education to every student that came across my path and those put in my care was insignificant. I lost a job that I loved going to everyday. Students lost a teacher who had put in hours and hours of work into their learning and education. I lost my income which was my family's primary financial stability. This not only impacted our day to day lifestyle and living expenses, it impacted our upcoming [REDACTED] plans which were then too late to change. It created a massive stress and burden regarding paying our mortgage and day to day bills. It created uncertainty for my family and stress within my relationship with my husband. This also created massive stress for my family as I had to find new work, which earned me significantly less than what I was earning as a teacher employed by the [REDACTED] which meant that we seriously needed to adjust our lifestyle to this new situation which we weren't prepared for.

As a result of being stood down, I was forced to use a large chunk of my sick leave to survive, I was forced to take one year's leave without pay to ensure I had a position to return to in case the mandates were dropped. However, I was forced to take this option to keep this position I had worked hard to earn. Had I not taken this option I would have been terminated, lost my accrued annual and sick leave and had no position to return to. This then impacted my rights to maternity leave as I did fall pregnant in [REDACTED] but could not access maternity leave through [REDACTED] because I had not worked the required amount of weeks necessary. Had I not been stood down and forced to take this leave, I would have worked in my position as a teacher under my ongoing contract and received my maternity leave and been able to care for my child rather than being forced to go back to work. To ensure that I could spend more time with my child I had to request to use my long service leave entitlements. As a result of the mandates I was denied my basic human rights. I was forced to choose between my health and safety and my career that I had spent so much time and effort working towards which jeopardised my family and our future.

When I initially put forth my medical certificates for my sick leave, I was denied. When I called the [REDACTED] and had my principal call [REDACTED] as well the leave was then accepted. I was yet again made to feel like I had done something wrong for putting myself first and not being allowed to use the entitlements that were rightfully mine. Again, this just added to the serious stress I was dealing with.

I sent letters to many members of [REDACTED] and the ministers involved in this process with little and in some cases no response asking for the safety information being provided to mandate these vaccines. I sent through and mentioned the Product Information sheets which could not guarantee my safety in taking a forced drug, this was ignored.

Throughout September to December of 2021, I received constant reminders through text and email to 'upload my vaccination certificate' as well as termination threats. In December 2021 I received threats from [REDACTED] to withhold my holiday pay which I was entitled to as I used sick leave after being stood down that ceased at the end of the school term. These threats filled me with anxiety, unease and uncertainty for my future. I was forced to look for other employment opportunities which was exceedingly difficult due to each and every workplace requiring their staff to provide a valid vaccination certificate. I was truly made to feel like an outcast and had to make impossible decisions in a time of so much uncertainty and fear. There was stressor upon stressor throughout this whole time.

How can anyone say that the 'no jab no job' policy is not discriminatory? It was simple, take a drug or lose your job. Regardless of what anyone was detailing about it preventing individuals from contracting COVID-19, stopping transmission and spreading the disease, lessening the effects if contracted etc, compelling and coercing individuals to take anything is nothing short of a breach of human rights. How can anyone be forced to take something they don't want? As mentioned, even when I requested information from my employer to ensure that I could provide informed consent, my requests were ignored, yet I still lost my job, my career that I had dedicated myself to for many years and my livelihood which then had significant financial and mental ramifications.

This paves the way for employers and/or governments to force citizens to comply with the most dangerous and unrealistic measures to simply live. I myself was unable to provide valid informed consent because no information was ever given to me by [REDACTED] regarding the COVID 19 vaccination, not during the time of the mandate being enforcement nor anytime thereafter. Therefore, this was coercion plain and simple. I sent multiple emails and made phone calls with general and specific questions regarding the vaccine, requesting information which would allow me to give my informed consent but none was provided.

Please also note in the time prior to and while the mandates were being enforced the Fair Work Commission, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Safe Work Australia and the Business Council of Australia all made similar comments stating that employers could not require employees to be vaccinated against coronavirus to retain their employment. Yet, the policy was enforced.

The enforcement of 'no jab no job' has absolutely violated national and international laws and declarations that have been put in place to prevent these very types of incidences from occurring. These breaches include violations to the;

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UN);
- Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights 2005 (UN);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (UN) ('ICCPR');

- Australia's ratification via Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) which enshrines the ICCPR and associated Commonwealth of Australia law; and
- Victoria's human rights legislation is informed by the above, for example section article 10 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).

The 'no jab no job' policy also breaches the Australian Constitution, Part V 51. xxiiiA which reads **'The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to: ... the provision of maternity allowance, widows' pensions, child endowment, unemployment, pharmaceutical, sickness and hospital benefit, medical and dental services (but not as to authorise any form of civil conscription), benefits to students and family allowances.'**

I hope that with the establishment of this Inquiry, the statements and values of the legal documents mentioned above will be fully recognised to ensure that human rights are met regardless of events and circumstances. I am not the only person who has been adversely affected by these mandates. I myself chose not to take a COVID 19 vaccination, many others did too and many more were left with no choice but to comply to survive. My voice is one of many, there are others also speaking out and others who feel too defeated and have lost any hope that their voices will make a difference. I feel deeply discouraged and frustrated that those who are elected to represent the community, created a fear campaign and pitted people against each other, forcing people to choose between their health, values, basic human rights and keeping a roof over their heads and food on the table. Likewise, the very bodies who are set up to support the most extreme of injustices have not fulfilled their role. So many people, myself included, have been failed. This then ripples out and has impacted families too, like my own. So far, my human rights have been completely eliminated. I was forced out of a job for no valid reason and have suffered mentally, socially and financially as a result.

I will continue to fight for justice in this matter, as the 'no jab no job' event has had a major impact on myself and my family since its implementation.

### **The Role of the Government**

It is clear that the federal government took a weak position on the COVID-19 response by handing off its decision making to the state governments to bypass the Australian Constitution. As mentioned, the Prime Minister commented that we would not have a federal vaccination policy, so handed the responsibility of enforcing this to the states who came down heavy handedly. This ruined livelihoods, businesses, social, emotional and physical health for hundreds of thousands. People are still being ignored and given the run around in relation to their adverse reactions, the healthcare system is not reporting the true amount of adverse reactions and the governing bodies did not step in end the vaccination policy when adverse reactions did begin to occur. The government took a narrow minded approach, ignoring not only medical opinions by basic common sense by forcing a nation to be injected with an experimental vaccine that had not been tested anywhere near as long as the shortest time it took to get other vaccines on the market. Medical professionals, and anyone for that matter, who spoke out with sufficient evidence against the universal vaccination policy was shut down and slandered. These were like scenes from [REDACTED] The State and Federal Governments allowed all of this to happen.

As a school teacher I personally witnessed the impact that the lockdowns had on students (who are just children), parents, families and the wider school community. Stating 'we're all in this together' was a slap in the face slogan to make everyone feel as though we all should just get on with the

circumstance without actually considering the impact that the rules had on each and every person in the community. We had children not being allowed to use a playground, human beings not allowed to leave their house for longer than a single hour a day and not being allowed to attend the shopping centre more than once a day too. This was madness, cooping people up like caged animals. People, regardless of their opinions and stance, are free willed and free thinkers who should have been able to make up their own minds about whether it was safer for them to engage with others, move within society or stay in the comfort of their own homes. I witnessed children spend more time on the computer and social media, engaging less with friends and being consumed by the internet all to their detriment. I saw children nervous and anxious to return to school, extremely fearful of contracting a virus, lacking basic social skills to cope with everyday life, slipping into mental health issues and failing to meet their academic potential as a direct result of the 'online education' that was provided. Now, this is not to slam teachers, who did it tough personally and professionally, but this 'online education' was a shambles compared to the kind of education that can be tailored to student's needs in an actual learning environment where conversations can be had, a teacher can give different explanations to consolidate concepts, hands on materials can be provided and learning from peers can truly occur.

The damage that this has had on our healthcare system has and still is absolutely abhorrent. Waitlists for all kinds of mental and physical health conditions are years long, it is insanely hard to get an appointment let alone actual treatment. We have people living with all sorts of pain as a result of a backed up health care system because people could not be attended to during lockdowns and because of the mental impact that the lockdowns have had on people too. We have issues such as socialisation issues in young children, speech issues because they haven't been around others to learn, worsening of mental health issues for all ages, all of which society will have to support through more taxes to meet the needs of this burden, a burden solely heightened by locking people indoors and not providing the care that was needed.

### **Suggestions**

- adhere to the Australian Constitution and other key foundational documents that support human rights
- establish a committee, made up of citizen elected members of parliament from non-governing parties, who ensures that the government is taking advice from those with the relevant skill and knowledge on both sides of the argument. Where the government does not produce documentation, answer questions directly or honestly, members can be personally fined or lose their job
- take and disseminate advice from specialists, from both or all sides of the argument, ensuring it is shared publicly, freely and without bias or persecution from media and social media platforms
- seek advice, support and strategies from other states, countries and professionals who are already immersed in issues we might or will face in the future
- ensure employers are able to provide the relevant documentation to staff to ensure their Safety and ability to make informed choices where they employer will be penalised heavily if they do not provide this
- no lockdowns, regardless of the issue. We now have delivery and click and collect services to meet our basic needs if people do not want to leave their homes

-allowing people to attend preventative, diagnostic and treatment medical appointments face to face

-businesses to have the ability to make flexible arrangements for workers, where applicable, but not be able to enforce medical procedures on its workers, nor store their medical information

-an overhaul and investigation into the role of the government, both at a state and federal level, to ensure that the government is complying with the expectations and duties of its job, adheres to its obligations and does not operate outside of this.

