

HRC submission

To whom it may concern,

My name is Phillip Norman and I live in [REDACTED]. In November 2021 I lost my job due to my conscientious objection to the WA Covid Vaccine mandates imposed by the McGowan government. I was employed as a bookkeeper/payroll officer at a local disability services provider and had the ability to perform all aspects of my job working remotely from home, but despite this I was needlessly terminated by my employer.

I objected to the vaccine mandates because they had not undergone the normal rigorous long-term testing process that vaccines are usually subjected to and as such, I was not convinced that, in taking the vaccine, I would not be at risk of long-term side effects.

The period during which the vaccine mandates were imposed by the McGowan state government was one of the most stressful periods of my life. I was on the receiving end of outright discrimination and harassment because I did not agree with the prevailing narrative regarding the safety of the new Covid vaccines. I also believed it to be a violation of basic human rights to be forced to receive a vaccination that had not undergone thorough testing and which had been well-documented to cause serious side-effects such as myocarditis.

Why should I place myself at risk of developing myocarditis by taking a vaccine of questionable safety and efficacy – one that could have a permanent effect on my health? Moreover, on 29/09/2021 the Australian Bureau of Statistics stated on their website that “COVID-19 was the 38th ranked cause of death in 2020”. This indicates that there were 37 other conditions that caused a greater number of deaths than Covid 19 *at the height of the pandemic*. This begs the question - why was there not the same level of media and government attention given to these 37 other causes?

I have attached a couple of documents to this submission which provide evidence that vaccine deployment programs actually had the effect of increasing Covid 19 cases, and that vaccination did not have the effect of preventing transmission, as 89% of new covid cases in the UK were among the fully vaccinated (please see references below).

This was an extremely stressful period in my life because I was unable to get a new job because of the vaccine mandates. After losing my job, I repeatedly applied for jobs which I was well qualified for, only to be turned down because of my non-vaccinated status. I cannot begin to describe the intensity of despair that this situation caused both myself and my partner. No one should be deprived of the ability to earn an income and support themselves and their loved ones purely because of their political beliefs. During this time I experienced intense depression and anxiety and sought support through counselling to alleviate my suffering. I experienced suicidal thoughts and was deeply fearful of being unable to pay our bills and to continue being able to support and house myself and my wife. In turn this no-win situation placed an enormous strain on our relationship.

Fortunately, after a couple of months of being unemployed and being repeatedly turned away by employers because of my vaccination status I was able to obtain employment. However, as it turned out, it was in the very last place that I ever expected to be able to find employment. To my astonishment, I managed to secure a position at the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) in West Perth, despite the fact that Premier McGowan was the one that imposed the vaccine mandates. I was informed that the vaccine mandates did not apply to any of the employees of DPC because it was classed as a Federal department, and not a state department. I was utterly incredulous but nevertheless grateful that I could resume earning an income. My wife was also able to continue

working at the Department of Justice throughout this period. Again, for reasons unknown, the vaccine mandates were not imposed on the employees of her particular department.

The fact that various government departments were exempt from the vaccine mandates proves that the vaccine mandates were never a public health measure, but rather purely a political manoeuvre aimed at bolstering the public's opinion of McGowan's leadership at the time. If it truly were a public health measure aimed at preventing the transmission of the virus, then it would go without saying that the mandates would have applied to all individuals in Western Australia, and that no one at all (including those in privileged Government departments) would be exempt from the vaccine. I am grateful that during our period of employment in our respective government departments we were exempt from having to be vaccinated, however it merely highlighted the hypocritical and ludicrous nature of the vaccine mandates. It makes no sense at all that workers in specific government departments should be exempt from vaccine mandates purely because they work in particular departments. But again, this happened because the mandates were imposed for political reasons, and not public health reasons.

You might be tempted to conclude that "all's well that ends well", however that is not the point. Thousands of people were not as fortunate as myself to be able to find a way to continue supporting themselves throughout the period that the mandates were imposed. Like myself, they were treated like lepers and prevented from entering bars and restaurants and so forth. No one should ever have to endure such discriminatory treatment from others and be treated with such contempt because of a government's public policy.

While we were employed at our respective government jobs, we continued to be on the receiving end of harassment and discriminatory behaviour because our employers (and all employers for that matter) failed to recognise that labelling individuals as "anti-vaxxers" and condoning derogatory comments towards those who objected to the vaccine mandates met all of the standard definitions of discrimination and harassment.

According to the Fairwork Act, discrimination "occurs when an employer takes adverse action against an employee or prospective employee because of one or more of the following attributes:

race

colour

sex

sexual orientation

breastfeeding

gender identity

intersex status

age

physical or mental disability

marital status

family or carer's responsibilities

pregnancy

religion

**political opinion**

national extraction

social origin."

We had no choice but to silently endure such treatment from colleagues, and regularly had to listen to conversations where people openly ridiculed those who objected to the vaccine mandates as "anti-vaxxers" and as being "selfish individuals" who should be rounded up en masse and put to death, and such like. We had to endure such treatment silently because we knew that if we

complained of such mistreatment it would be dismissed by our employers on the grounds that such behaviour could be condoned because the victims concerned had gone against the government's so-called "health directive".

In times of future pandemics, people need to have their autonomy and rights respected so that they can make decisions that can profoundly and irreversibly impact their health – in this instance, whether or not to take vaccines of dubious quality – free from duress and discrimination. Australia also needs to shore up its anti-discrimination laws so that those who choose not to take vaccinations are not discriminated against or harassed, and so that they have recourse for protection and compensation in the face of such discrimination.

## **References:**

Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Mortality rate declines during the first year of the pandemic" <https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/mortality-rate-declines-during-first-year-pandemic>. Accessed 12/12/2023.

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The Lancet (2021). "Lancet: 89% Of New UK COVID Cases Among Fully Vaxxed." <https://principia-scientific.com/lancet-89-of-new-uk-covid-cases-among-fully-vaxxed/>. Accessed 12/12/2023