

8 August 2021

IEU members welcome priority vaccinations for Queensland education workers

School employers must provide paid vaccination leave

The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch has welcomed today's announcement that all Queensland education workers will get COVID-19 vaccine priority.

The IEU-QNT is the union representing over 17,000 teachers and support staff across Queensland and the Northern Territory non-government schools.

IEU-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke said the union, along with the Queensland Teacher's Union (QTU), had been repeatedly calling for the priority vaccination of education workers.

"After weeks of campaigning, the voice of our members has been heard with the state government today (Sunday, 8 August 2021) announcing priority access for any kindergarten or school employee who seeks to get vaccinated," Mr Burke said.

"The Delta variant's high transmission rates amongst children and multiple outbreaks in school communities have clearly reinforced the desperate need for education workers to have access to the vaccination program.

"School staff have at all times met the challenges of this pandemic with professionalism and commitment to our students and they deserve safe workplaces.

"We have also been calling on all school employers to provide up to two days of special paid vaccination leave for employees who are unable to obtain appointments outside of work time.

"A shared commitment by employers to support the vaccination program will help minimise the risks the Delta variant poses to our school communities," he said.

My Burke said while lockdown restrictions were set to ease in South-East Queensland today (Sunday, 8 August 2021), school communities in Cairns were now in the same place their SEQ counterparts were just one week ago.

"Our union is working with our members in the Cairns region as they face this next challenge in the pandemic," Mr Burke said.

"The Cairns lockdown will require limited onsite school attendance and a transition to remote work consistent with the recent arrangements in SEQ.

“As with the SEQ lockdown last week, it is likely that some schools will require a higher level of onsite staff attendance on Monday as schools transition to remote learning and establish supervision arrangements for the children of essential workers.

“We would expect that by Tuesday at the latest, schools should be in a position to move to minimal staffing rosters and most staff can work from home.

“We have also written to Cairns Catholic Education Services seeking their urgent confirmation of such immediate steps.

“Whether it’s Cairns, SEQ or elsewhere in the state, important safety procedures and precautions must continue for the protection of all Queensland school staff and students,” Mr Burke said.

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The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) represents more than 17,000 education professionals across Queensland and the Northern Territory. www.ieuqnt.org.au