

30 November 2021

Non-government school employers must consult following mandatory COVID-19 vaccination health directive

The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch has called on all non-government school employers to follow relevant consultation requirements in light of the announcement that a COVID-19 mandatory vaccination health directive will be issued.

IEU-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke said while the Chief Health Officer's (CHO) health directive would clearly pose significant challenges, a health directive was a lawful direction to all employers and employees.

"The timing of the announcement as schools prepare to close for the vacation period poses significant challenges to the implementation of the directive," Mr Burke said.

"It is essential that employers always follow due process and established consultation requirements given the implications of this major workplace change.

"Our union will be seeking urgent discussions with employers to confirm critical local level implications of the health directive, including:

- Comprehensive consultation with our union, employees and workplace health and safety officers.
- A process by which to confirm genuine medical exemptions for identified employees.
- Privacy protections and reasonable timeframes to apply to any employer procedure/s seeking to record the vaccination status of employees.
- Support for employees in the form of access to leave or redeployment where necessary.

"It is essential employers meet the significant challenges of the current situation with compassion, patience and understanding.

"Employers must ensure adequate resourcing and additional short-term staffing where necessary.

"It is imperative workload and working arrangements for employees are not adversely impacted.

"As with all workplace issues, our union is here to support members to ensure fair employment arrangements – this situation is no different.

"Throughout the pandemic, our union has minded the interests of our members and we will continue to do so," Mr Burke said.

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The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) represents more than 17,000 teachers, school support staff, principals and early childhood education employees across Queensland and the Northern Territory.

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