



# AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

13 October 2020

The Hon Scott Morrison  
Prime Minister of Australia  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

## **THE FRAMEWORK FOR COVID-19 VACCINE ALLOCATION – REQUEST FOR HIGH RISK HEALTH WORKER PRIORITY STATUS**

Dear Prime Minister,

The Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) is the peak industry body with members in all States and Territories representing around 65% of the 160,000 deaths in Australia annually.

On behalf of AFDA I thank the Prime Minister for your leadership throughout COVID-19 and particularly for preserving the ability for families to attend funeral services, unlike a number of other countries where funerals were banned.

The removal of COVID-19 positive deceased from the place of death into the care of funeral workers carries obvious health risks, as does the exposure of funeral workers to living relatives who may be positive to the virus. Throughout the pandemic the funeral industry has been exemplary in the management of hygiene controls with COVID-19 deceased and also as gatekeepers of funeral attendance restrictions. Despite the funeral industry's successful health record, there remains an ever-present health risk to funeral workers when caring for a COVID-19 positive deceased, often in an aged care setting.

In recognition of the critical health function performed by funeral directors during a pandemic, on 2 October 2020 the National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine (USA) released the "Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine" to USA health authorities which included funeral directors in the highest priority cohort for vaccine allocation, together with other high-risk health workers.

AFDA similarly requests that Australian funeral directors be included in the first group to whom vaccines are allocated recognising their high-risk health status on the frontline.

Yours faithfully,

**Andrew Pinder**  
**National President**

**Dale Gilson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

CC:

The Hon Michael McCormack, Deputy Prime Minister  
The Hon Greg Hunt, Minister for Health  
Premiers and Chief Ministers of all States and Territories  
Health Ministers of all States and Territories

*Promoting*

*professional*

*funeral standards*

Australian Funeral Directors  
Association Limited  
Level 1, 700 High Street  
(PO Box 291)  
KEW EAST VIC 3102

ABN 33 007 331 580  
Phone: (03) 9859 9966  
Fax: (03) 9819 7390  
Email: [info@afda.org.au](mailto:info@afda.org.au)  
Web: [www.afda.org.au](http://www.afda.org.au)