



AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

24 February 2021

Priority for funeral directors under the COVID-19 vaccination program

Professor Paul Kelly,
Chief Medical Officer
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Kelly,

I refer to your letter dated the 4th November 2020 in relation to the review of Funeral front-line staff as priority personnel for the COVID-19 vaccination.

Firstly, can I commend you and your Government on the commencement of the COVID-19 vaccination program and all other measures you have taken to keep Australians safe throughout the pandemic. As the peak industry body, we are determined to play our role.

The purpose of our letter is to request that consideration be given to including front line funeral directors in the earliest priority phases of the vaccination rollout program. This has been the case in other countries, including the United Kingdom, where funeral directors have been declared frontline healthcare workers.

Despite Australia's enormous success in fighting COVID-19, funeral directors remain at high risk on the frontline of the pandemic. This alone justifies priority consideration under the vaccination program.

However, there is also a particular circumstance that necessitates their inclusion in the earliest rounds of the rollout.

With aged care and disability care staff and residents being included in Phase 1a of the program, as is entirely appropriate, this is likely to lead to access to aged care homes being restricted or denied to those who have not been vaccinated. These restrictions are likely to be rolled out at other healthcare facilities as the vaccination program continues.

Funeral Directors who are members of the Australian Funeral Directors Association play a vital role in the recovery of deceased aged care residents – a role that would be impossible unless our employees were included in the same priority phase of the vaccination program as staff and residents.

For this reason, and for the protection of our workers, we believe it is important that funeral directors are declared frontline healthcare workers and given priority under the rollout.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Promoting
professional
funeral standards

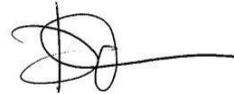
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Yours faithfully,



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CC

The Hon Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia
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