



AUSTRALIAN  
FUNERAL  
DIRECTORS  
ASSOCIATION

Australian Funeral Directors  
Association Limited  
Level 1, 700 High Street  
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KEW EAST VIC 3102

17 January 2022

The Hon. Yvette D'Ath MP  
Minister for Health  
Queensland Government  
By email: [dlo@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:dlo@health.qld.gov.au)



Dear Minister D'Ath,

### **Re:- Critical Worker Status for Funeral Sector Workers**

We write to you to request "critical worker" status for funeral sector workers as Queensland's current close-contact isolation requirements are having a significant impact on the industry with potential future ramifications for housing of the deceased.

#### **About the AFDA**

The Australian Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) is the peak industry body with members in all States and Territories representing around 60% of the 160,000 deaths in Australia annually. Some 95% of our members are small and family-owned businesses. The funeral industry provides critical and essential services to the broader community and has continued to provide these services over the past two years of the pandemic.

#### **Need for Critical Worker Status**

The rapidly growing COVID-19 case numbers nationally, including in Queensland, is impacting the availability of funeral staff due to current isolation requirements for those deemed to be close contacts of positive cases. This, in turn, is impacting the sector's ability, especially the many small and family-owned businesses we represent, to conduct essential funeral services due to the state's current mandatory self-isolation requirements for close contacts of positive cases. Consequently, capacity for housing of the deceased is coming under increasing pressure and will have significant ramifications if it is not addressed soon.

#### **Our Request**

On behalf of funeral operators in Queensland we seek your support in:

1. The explicit inclusion of funeral service, cemetery and crematoria workers under the state's definition of critical or essential worker status;
2. Providing more immediate access to Rapid Antigen Testing kits for funeral service, cemetery and crematoria workers; and,
3. Including funeral service, cemetery and crematoria workers in any priority access of booster vaccines provided to critical or essential workers.

In support of our request, we point to the National Cabinet's decision on Thursday 13 January regarding close contact furlough arrangements for essential sectors, and its extension of the isolation exemption to health, welfare, care and support services. As outlined in the National

Cabinet's announcement, we believe this exemption should include funeral service, cemetery and crematoria workers in Queensland. Indeed, this was the approach adopted by the NSW Government, which, last week, explicitly included an exemption for the sector under its new Health Orders (see attached – Item No. 6).

If this exemption is not extended to funeral service, cemetery and crematoria workers there will be further delays in funeral services, which will impact our ability to deal with the deceased in a timely and respectful manner. Ultimately, facilities for housing of the deceased will be severely impacted with considerable ramifications to come.

AFDA and its members will continue to support the current COVID-19-guidelines of the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments as we all work together to keep our loved ones and communities safe.

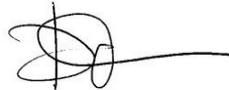
Should you require further information or wish to discuss this matter with us feel free to contact our government affairs consultant, Alistair Nicholas, on 0419 290 578 or via email at [alistair@alistairnicholas.com](mailto:alistair@alistairnicholas.com).

We commend our request to your urgent consideration and look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully



Adrian Barrett  
National President



Dale Gilson  
Chief Executive Officer