



The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Minister for Health
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Robert McDonald,
Clerk, Legislative Council
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Dear Mr McDonald

Thank you for your letter regarding two petitions tabled in the Legislative Council on 19 June 2025, requesting a review of current vaccine mandates imposed on workers, and a halt to gender affirmation practices in Victoria.

I acknowledge the petitioner's concerns and provide my response below.

Petition no. 545: Review of current vaccine mandates

As an occupational group, healthcare workers are at increased risk of vaccine-preventable disease if not vaccinated. Secretary Directions and Ministerial Directions have been enacted under the *Health Services Act 1988* (Vic), *Ambulance Services Act 1986* (Vic) and *Mental Health Act 2014* (Vic) requiring specified healthcare workers in prescribed healthcare settings to be vaccinated annually against influenza. These requirements seek to protect the health and safety of these healthcare workers and their patients.

The COVID-19 vaccine Secretary Directions were revoked on 4 October 2024. Victorian healthcare workers are now strongly recommended to remain up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations as per Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) advice and the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

More broadly, employers requiring their workforce to undergo certain vaccinations is not new and predates the emergence of COVID-19.

Petition no. 548: Halt gender affirmation practices in Victoria

In Victoria, we are committed to ensuring our trans and gender diverse communities can continue to access timely, safe and quality health care.

The majority of Cass review recommendations are not applicable to Victoria which already delivers holistic, multidisciplinary and evidence-based care.

In January 2025, the Commonwealth Government announced that it will be engaging the National Health and Medical Research Council to review the Australian standards and develop new national guidelines. The Victorian Government welcomed this review at the time.

I trust this information has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MA Thomas', written in a cursive style.

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

27/07/2025