

Monday 22nd February 2021

Vaccine does not replace the need to maintain other important workplace safety measures

Statement attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary Liam O'Brien:

The ACTU welcomes the start of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Everyone who is able should get the vaccine as soon as it is available - they are tested and safe and will ultimately stop the spread of this pandemic.

The vaccine rollout will not happen overnight, and it is essential that all workers - especially those in high-risk industries - continue to be kept safe in their workplaces by the social distancing and other procedures which have saved so many lives over the last year.

The ACTU will continue to fight to ensure workers in high risk workplaces get access to the vaccines as soon as possible. Whether it be for workers like those in our supermarkets and schools and who operate our public transport service, these essential workers must be protected. These are the workers who, in the event of community transmission, are on the front line of exposure to this virus and deserve protection alongside those working in healthcare, hotel quarantine, aged and disability care.

The ACTU supports the existing processes for determining when vaccines are mandatory for certain workplaces. These decisions should continue to be made by public health experts and supported by Public Health Orders and not by individual employers.

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