

Saturday, 15 January 2022

Woolworths continues to turn a blind eye as workers forced to work while infected with Covid

Woolworths continues to turn a blind eye as one of its major suppliers, Teys Australia, forces its workforce at its abattoir in South Australia to turn up for work even though they are infected with the Covid virus.

These infected workers are working, under duress, in the same facility as negative workers, using the same bathrooms and working in the same common areas, required to wear coloured hairnets to indicate their Covid infection status.

Woolworths must be held to account for acquiescing in this demeaning and degrading practice. Woolworths is Teys biggest and most important customer, [doing \\$380 million of business every year](#). This exposes Woolworths' claims to be a good corporate citizen as nothing more than a cynical exercise in PR spin.

Workers are worried about standing up to Teys individually. Many are here on temporary visas, with Teys controlling their pay cheque and their passport. They are fearful of losing their job and being kicked out of the country if they complain, which would be financially devastating.

The time for Woolworths to act is running out. The next shift at the affected abattoir starts on Monday morning. Woolworths must act now.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“Woolworths is turning a blind eye to the exploitation of workers by a major food supplier in the supermarket's supply chain, Teys Australia, who are forcing workers to continue turning up for work even though they are infected with the Covid virus.

“Workers are being forced to wear coloured hairnets to say whether they are infected. This is outrageous behaviour.

“Many of the workers are here on temporary visas, with their boss controlling their pay cheque and their passport. They are scared of losing their job and being kicked out of the country if they complain, which would financially devastate their entire family.

“Woolworths must be held to account for going along with this disgraceful behaviour. Woolies is Teys biggest and most important customer, doing \$380 million of business every single year. Woolies has the power to stop this outrage, the question is, will they?

“When Australians go to Woolies to do their grocery shopping, does Woolies tell them this is the product they are buying, food produced by workers forced to work while infected with Covid?

“Even the Government safety regulator won't send in inspectors to this site because it's too dangerous. Woolies must practice what they preach and demand Teys allow every COVID positive worker to isolate and recover”

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