

CORONAVIRUS — VACCINATIONS — POLICE

358. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Does this government have any plans to expand mandatory vaccination to other sectors of the workforce, and has the Premier sought advice from the Chief Health Officer on the application of this to other sectors of the workforce, for example, the WA Health sector?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The national cabinet has agreed to put in place public health laws across Australia in each of the jurisdictions for people who work in aged care. Aged-care residents are very vulnerable. Obviously, if an aged-care resident is vaccinated, it helps to protect them. If people in the workforce are also vaccinated, their transmissibility or capacity to transmit the virus reduces; therefore, the workforce getting vaccinated is incredibly important, so we have agreed across Australia that we will put in place by 15 September a requirement for the workforce to get vaccinated. That is a national agreement, so that is one workforce.

We are looking at other workforces such as the health workforce; we are looking at the workforce in ports; national cabinet has discussed it in relation to other workforces that are highly—how do I put it?—exposed and have the capacity to spread it. For instance, think about the people who work for airlines and all the people who fly between the states. All those issues are currently under consideration, but the one that has been decided is the aged-care workforce at this point in time, because people in aged care can die in large numbers. We saw that in Victoria. We have seen that overseas.

These are tough things and difficult things, but what I have found over the last 18 months is that doing tough and difficult things saves your state. It saves your state. If you are not prepared to do tough and difficult things, you should not be in these roles. We recently saw in another state that people were not prepared to lockdown when they should have, and we now see the consequence. People criticise me and criticise this government for taking action early and somewhat extreme measures, but extreme and tough measures work and we make no apology for that.