

C063

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
**Question Without Notice**

**Wednesday 16 February 2021**

**Hon Martin Aldridge MLC to the Minister representing the Minister for Health**

My question without notice of which some notice has been given is to the Minister representing the Minister for Health

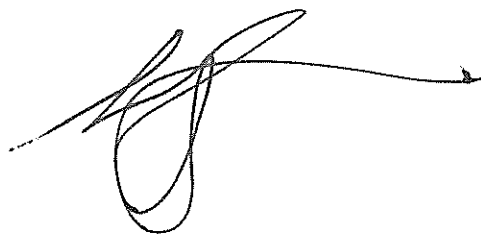
I refer to new measures aimed at mitigating the risk of COVID-19 to Parliament and its occupants, and I ask:

1. Has the Chief Health Officer or his delegate provided advice to Parliament, its Presiding Officers or any other relevant person in relation to COVID-19 arrangements;
2. If yes to (1) please table that advice;
3. Has the Chief Health Officer provided advice that supports the majority of Members in the Legislative Council speaking from one place rather their usual place in the Chamber as being an effective public health measure; and
4. Has the Chief Health Officer changed his advice of 22 October 2021 in relation to those occupations that fall within category 3 and require vaccination to attend their workplace only in 'the event of future lockdowns or major restrictions'?

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**ANSWER:**

1 – 4. Yes. However the Presiding Officers are seeking further clarification on the advice, and expect to receive further advice. I table the initial advice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script. The signature starts with a large, sweeping loop on the left, followed by several smaller loops and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Health

The Honourable Mark McGowan MLA  
Premier of Western Australia  
13 Floor, Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Premier

### **MANDATORY VACCINATION FOR PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

In my advice of 19 and 22 October 2021, I outlined the need for mandatory vaccination to mitigate the risks of critical services being degraded in the event of lockdown or major restrictions and in preparation for the opening of interstate and/or international borders, with consequent outbreaks. In reviewing those mandates, a further workforce has been identified that needs to be considered for mandatory vaccination. Previous mandates have covered workers in WA Police; Healthcare; Correctional Facilities; childcare, schools and TAFEs; essential retail, hospitality and accommodation; critical infrastructure and services; commercial and public transport; and courts and tribunals.

It has been brought to my attention, by the Presiding Officers of the Parliament of Western Australia and its Executive Manager of Parliamentary Services, that parliamentary employees who work at a parliamentary site should be considered for mandatory vaccinations. These employees provide critical support to the Parliament of Western Australia so that it may continue to function for the order and good governance of the Western Australian community during the current public health state of emergency. Parliamentary employees at parliamentary sites require protection by mandatory vaccination to minimise the likelihood of interruption to parliamentary business. Parliamentary sites include the primary building, being Parliament House, parliamentary grounds and three annexes.

The Parliament of Western Australia has done what they can to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission; however, there are limitations on the mitigation measures that can be executed within the present physical environment. By definition, parliament is a gathering or assembly of people, and, therefore, the congregation of people cannot be avoided, and physical distancing is restricted to some extent by the existing infrastructure.

Vaccination provides the best mitigation in preventing individuals from getting COVID-19 disease and from developing severe disease, which may require extended periods away from work. In the current Omicron outbreak in Australia, the booster dose of vaccine will provide a further benefit with reduction in transmission of disease and further protection from severe illness. The mandatory vaccination of Parliamentary employees will provide protection to the workforce as a whole and help to secure

ongoing functioning and service delivery at Parliament House, as well its grounds and annexes.

It is, therefore, my advice, as Chief Health Officer, that, as far as possible, all parliamentary employees who work at a parliamentary site should be vaccinated. The Direction should be applied to all parliamentary employees who work at a parliamentary site including but not limited to: Parliamentary Officers in the Office of the President of the Legislative Council, Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Office of the Executive Manager Parliamentary Services, Legislative Council Committee Office, Legislative Assembly Committee Office, Parliamentary Services Department, as well as Parliamentary services support employees in the following areas: building services, catering services, education services, executive services, finance services, human resources, information technology, library, reception, reporting and security services.

It is not intended that mandatory vaccination Directions will apply to Members of Parliament, who hold a unique status as elected representatives, rather than employees. The Directions also will not apply to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, or to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council, as these persons are office holders and not employees.

Many persons attend Parliament of Western Australia, for a variety of reasons, including visitors attending the Public gallery and school tours, and, as such, a vaccination mandate cannot reasonably be applied to them. Other measures, such as bans on visitors, can be utilised to manage this group if the risk increases. The mandate will also need to exclude a person who is not a parliamentary employee providing services at a parliamentary site.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Robertson CSC, PSM  
**CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER**

11 February 2022