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## Business support grows for mandatory work vaccinations

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**Business support for mandating Covid vaccinations in workplaces is growing, with a national survey of 700 companies finding a quarter would like compulsory jobs of their employees.**

**An Australian Industry Group survey of business attitudes to mandatory Covid vaccination in workplaces found more than half were in favour of some form of mandating.**

**Twenty-four per cent said they would like to mandate Covid vaccinations for some or all of their employees; and 27 per cent said they would like Covid vaccinations to be mandated only through a health order related to their industry.**

**Ai Group chief executive Innes Willox said the survey results showed there was a significant number of companies expressing support for mandating Covid vaccinations.**

**“The message for policymakers is that despite the red herring put around in recent days that health orders are the only way to go for mandating Covid vaccinations, there are a large number of employers ready to use longstanding legal rights to introduce mandating where lawful and reasonable,” he said.**

**An array of employer groups**

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## Business support for mandated jobs

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called on the Morrison government to clarify the rights of companies to enforce mandatory Covid vaccinations in customer-facing workplaces, with the restaurant and cafe sector accusing the Coalition of turning small businesses into “legal guinea pigs”.

Australian Mines and Metals Association chief executive Steve Knott said executives from 20 resource sector companies met on Friday and “most are planning or considering mandating” of site-based roles. “They are currently in the “strong encouragement” and consultation phases for vaccine supply and legal process reasons,” he said.

“Contracting entities are planning to respond to client directives for compulsory vaccination of all personnel working on clients’ worksites.

“Already some are requiring vaccinations for all staff travelling on both domestic and international flights.”

Fruit and vegetable processor SPC claimed a growing Covid outbreak in the central Victorian town of Shepparton, where the company is based, vindicated its hardline stand on compulsory vaccines.

Tabcorp on Sunday said the wagering giant was considering incentives for its more-than-4000 permanent staff to be vaccinated.

“We’ve already introduced vaccination leave ... and we’re going to look at other measures that are preferably more carrot than stick in our approach”. However, he noted “we’re ruling nothing out” in going a step further for compulsory vaccines.

According to the Ai Group survey, 37 per cent of employers said they would “offer and en-

courage optional Covid vaccines” while the remaining 10 per cent said they were unsure or it was not applicable to their workplaces.

Mr Willox said the survey responses showed many businesses were looking to mandate Covid vaccination and “they will be closely watching those already moving in this direction and assessing what approaches and circumstances will be considered lawful and reasonable”.

“The group that favours health orders being in place no doubt would prefer the legal certainty that comes with such orders. However, governments do not appear to favour any significant expansion of the small number of such health orders now in place,” he said.

“For employers the question of whether or not to mandate has a long tail. Employers will initially look at the issue from the perspective of how they can protect their staff and their customers.

“As more businesses mandate vaccination, the question will shift to whether they will need to mandate vaccination for their own staff who visit businesses that have a mandate in place. There are also complexities for labour hire companies sending workers all over the country and for group training companies sending their apprentices into businesses that may mandate vaccination.

Transport giant Toll Group is introducing paid leave of up to four hours to support employees to attend COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

Unions oppose individual employers being able to unilaterally impose a mandatory vaccination policy and believe compulsory jobs should only be done through public health orders.