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## Qantas, BCA in vaccine rift

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Qantas will not be the last BCA member to proceed with the mandatory vaccination of its workforce irrespective of public health orders. **Rear Window p40**

# Rear Window



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### Qantas, BCA in vaccine rift

No wonder Industrial Relations Minister **Michaelia Cash** had to convene talks for workplace regulators, employer groups and unions yesterday morning to wrangle the vexed issue of companies mandating the COVID-19 vaccination of their staff. It appears to be an omnishambles.

Only last Friday, the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Council of Trade Unions had released a joint statement supporting the government's position that vaccination "should be free and voluntary".

"We believe that for the overwhelming majority of Australians, your work or workplace should not fundamentally alter the voluntary nature of vaccination," it read. "The ACTU and the BCA call on governments and the national cabinet to ... ensure that where mandatory vaccination requirements are necessary, they are implemented through the use of nationally consistent public health orders."

In yesterday's edition of *The Australian*, Australian Mines and Metals Association chief executive **Steve Knott** called on the Morrison government to "find their mojo on this issue and [stop] the paralysis".

Cash's meeting, attended (virtually)

by both BCA chief executive **Jennifer Westacott** and ACTU secretary **Sally McManus**,

began at 9.30am yesterday. At exactly that time, Qantas issued a press release to announce it "will require all employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19".

**Alan Joyce** isn't going to score his next massive tranche of performance shares with the nation's high-flyers chained to the ground by unceasing lockdown waves, so it's time to press-gang a few thousand bunched-up into needle booths. Frontline staff have until November 15 to be double-dosed.

Helpfully, 60 per cent of Qantas Group employees are already fully vaccinated, although the announcement was conspicuously silent on the career fates of any refuseniks in the ranks. A new call centre in Mullumbimby?

Predictably, Qantas' major unions went bananas at the bulletin. But with the carrier following so dramatically in food processor SPC's footsteps, the obvious question is: what paralysis?

Remember that Joyce is also a prominent BCA director. He chose to drop the airline's divergence from the BCA on "free and voluntary" jabs at the precise moment the business council's chief was reiterating its contrary position at a summit convened by

the relevant federal minister. Point made!

Qantas will not be the last BCA member to proceed with the mandatory vaccination of its workforce irrespective of public health orders. Why, then, has Westacott staked out **Continued p35**

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this position alongside trades hall on an issue of glaring incompatibility?



Precise timing:  
Qantas' Alan Joyce