



02 JUN, 2021

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Courier Mail, Brisbane

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EXCLUSIVE State to step in and jab aged care workers after rollout failure

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MADURA MCCORMACK

A VACCINATION blitz of Queensland aged care workers will be delivered by the state government after revelations the federal vaccine rollout in the sector was botched.

The federal government was late yesterday forced to reveal just 8.7

per cent of workers in the sector have received two jabs so far, after Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck struggled to answer questions.

The revelation prompted locked-down Victoria to announce it would undertake a five-day vaccination blitz targeting aged care workers, and The Courier-Mail understands

there are plans for a similar blitz here using the state's existing hospital Pfizer hubs.

Despite vaccination rates per 100 people doubling last month in Australia, we have at the same time fallen five places to 10th in a ranking of 14 developed nations – with the others moving far quicker. **REPORTS P5**



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D'Ath to fix Feds' botched aged care jab rollout

EXCLUSIVE

MADURA McCORMACK
FEDERAL POLITICAL REPORTER

A VACCINATION blitz of Queensland aged care workers will be taken on by the state government as it steps up to fix the federal government's botched vaccine rollout in the sector.

The federal government on Tuesday was forced to reveal just 8.7 per cent of workers in the sector had received two jabs so far.

The dire figure prompted Victoria, which is grappling with a 54-case outbreak, to announce it would undertake a five-day vaccination blitz from Wednesday by giving aged care workers priority access to jab hubs.

The Courier-Mail understands plans for a similar blitz in Queensland using the state's existing hospital Pfizer hubs will be finalised in coming days.

Queensland Health Minister Yvette D'Ath confirmed the state government wanted "to see all aged care workers vaccinated as soon as possible".

"We will have more to say in coming days about how they can get vaccinated," she said.

The federal government is facing sustained pressure over its slow and confusing vaccine rollout for aged care workers, who were meant to be fully vaccinated by the end of March.

Aged Care Minister Richard Colbeck on Tuesday struggled to give any comprehensive vaccination data for workers in the sector because the government doesn't have any way to track it

as staff are being told to join the general public queue for a jab.

New but incomplete data provided at Senate estimates on Tuesday revealed just 32,833 aged care workers had been fully vaccinated in Australia through the current policy of giving them leftover Pfizer doses when residents are jabbed.

This includes 6789 workers in Queensland.

The looming state takeover of the vaccine rollout in the aged care sector has been called for by the Australian Council of Trade Unions since April, when it wrote to federal government urging them to ask for help to get the rollout

"back on track". The Aged and Community Services Association, the peak body for the sector, slammed the federal government for attempting to shift the blame to providers or workers.

"Providers have been consistently telling the government that vaccines should be made available in the facilities themselves," ACSA chair Sara Blunt said

"We want action on vaccines to scale up. If this means using the defence forces that have assisted in remote areas, or bringing in other resources to enable 'in reach' workplace vaccinations, then the government should make it happen."

Queensland's state-run vaccination program on Tuesday hit a new daily high, administering more than 8000

doses in a 24-hour period – triple the number of jabs being given out just two weeks ago.

But a prominent Gold Coast doctor has said there's a "lack of clarity" for accessing the Pfizer jab for patients under 50 in the 1b category, who are recommended to get it as desperate residents (pictured) are arriving at the Gold Coast University Hospital at 4am to line up for the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccination, with some waiting eight hours. Prime Minister Scott Morrison called on all eligible Australians to come together and get vaccinated in a "Team Australia moment."

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