

My name is Lynda and I worked as an Early Childhood Educator. When the mandates came in December 2021 for the Education and Early Childhood sector, I choose not to get the Covid 19 vaccination at that time as it was still in trial and I was concerned about how quickly the vaccine had come out on the market. Childcare workers had been working nearly a whole year during the 'Covid pandemic' before we were mandated. That didn't make any sense. Why wait for so long if it was a 'pandemic'? It wasn't until my co-workers got vaccinated that they started getting sick with Covid. Before that no one at the center had gotten Covid.

Because of the stress of this situation of losing my job, I went on stress leave and took all my long service leave. I had over 400 hours of sick leave, which meant that I hardly got sick in the 10 years that I worked at the center.

While on sick leave I had to find employment in another sector that didn't require you to be vaccinated with the Covid 19 vaccination. This was very difficult as most sectors were mandating their employees. I started my own business which was the only way around not having to be vaccinated. I am still working my own business and picked up some work with an organization that didn't mandate, one of the very few.

Just before my sick leave and long service leave was used up, I was informed by my employer that I would be put on Special Pandemic Leave (which I didn't sign but they still put me on it) as I still hadn't been vaccinated. The mandates were then overturned in June but I was not asked to go back to work even though I was on a contract until the end of 2022. During the year of 2021 I had no contact from work employees, (except for a couple that had the same views of the vaccine) as they were told not to contact us. To me that was discrimination of the unvaccinated'.

I have my mother-in-law in an aged care center who I haven't been able to visit because of the mandates. She hasn't been able to see her grandchildren or great grandchildren. The government need to realise what it does to people in this situation. They become so lonely.

Because of my discrimination and loss of employment from being able to work in a job that I loved and had my livelihood taken from me, I fully support the Fair Work Amendment (Prohibiting Covid 19 Vaccine Discrimination) Bill 2023.

I fully support the Bill and agree with every Item in the Bill. Item 1 Section 12 4 that the definition of Covid-19 vaccination status into the Fair Work Act 2009.

Every Australian has the right to work without being discriminated against, therefore I agree with Item 5. as I was discriminated against.

The government pushes for diversity, and we are a diverse country, so therefore I agree with Item 6.

No employer should have the right to not employ someone because of their vaccination status in regards to Covid-19. It's discrimination. I agree with Item 4.

This Bill should be amended as soon as possible to allow Australians back into the work force doing the work they love to do. So many sectors are short staffed like the hospitals, emergency services, police force and schools. This should NEVER happen again.