

# AEU NT Member Bulletin 2/2021

25 February 2021

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### **COVID vaccine and AEU members**

With the COVID-19 vaccine rollout underway, some members have asked about the AEU's stance on the vaccine. Whilst the AEU NT Branch has not adopted a formal position on the vaccine rollout, at a national level the AEU recently endorsed the following statement:

*"The AEU understands, in relation to workers, that the immediate government priority for the COVID-19 vaccinations are workers in frontline health care, aged care, disability care and quarantine and border facilities. The AEU believes that high priority should also be given to teachers and education support personnel, as education settings are critical to societal functioning. Those working in education settings have a high level of collective exposure within the community every day and their critical importance to society, the economy and the nation's future prospects, have been clearly demonstrated during the pandemic."*

Based on the federal government's rollout timeline, teachers and other educators will receive the vaccine in accordance with their individual age or level of vulnerability. However, in accordance with the AEU's national stance, NT Branch senior officers will put the case to the NT Government that AEU members should be given priority as a category of critical frontline workers (phase 1b), especially those who work with students and communities that are potentially at greater risk from COVID-19. This includes special education settings, juvenile detention and re-engagement facilities, and remote schools.

The AEU did not endorse a position that the vaccine should be mandatory within our industry, however the consensus position was that widespread community uptake of the vaccine represents the best opportunity to date to protect the most vulnerable against the disease and to allow Australian society to return to a "normal" most closely resembling pre-pandemic life.

### **Register online for Branch Conference**

Sub-branches are reminded to hold meetings ASAP to elect delegates for our annual conference in Alice Springs on 1-2 May. The deadline to register as a delegate and to submit motions for consideration is Friday 19 March (Term 1, week 7). More information on the conference is [here](#), and once delegates are elected you can register online [here](#). Motions and any queries should be emailed to [conference@aeunt.org.au](mailto:conference@aeunt.org.au).

### **4.21 and other schoolyard myths**

As 2021 has unfolded, the office has received numerous queries about industrial issues such as working hours, the end of the working day for teachers (hint: it's not 4.21pm) and the use of non-contact time.

This is a periodic reminder to familiarise yourself with the [Teacher Responsibilities guide](#) and [our advice to members on the nature of teacher work and the working day](#).

Many elements of a teacher's working conditions and roles and responsibilities are spelled out in the guide, however there are also grey areas. Where there is ambiguity, genuine consultation between managers and

workers should occur. We encourage sub-branches to work through these issues at the local level first. As always, the union office can advise members and is available to assist in resolving any conflicts.

### **Free the Darwin 15**

This Saturday 27 February will mark one year since 15 refugees were transferred under the now-repealed Medevac law to Darwin from Nauru.

Like many other refugees transferred for medical reasons, they have not been given the attention they need. Instead, they have been imprisoned indefinitely in a compound at the Mercure Darwin Airport Resort. They have no knowledge of what their future holds.

The Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network ([DASSAN](#)) is spearheading a campaign for their freedom by organising daily vigils outside the hotel.

DASSAN is a community-based network of volunteers set up in 2010. Activists have been organising daily protests for nearly four weeks. Each Saturday nearly 200 people have been gathering to call on the government to end its inhumane treatment.

Organisers are holding a rally at 5pm this Saturday and would like an extra-large turnout. AEU members in the Darwin area are encouraged to join the action this Saturday to show your support for the 15 asylum seekers and demand they be freed.

Unions NT is supporting this campaign.

### **Let us know ASAP if your workplace, contact details or income have changed**

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