



Australian Mariners' Welfare Society

ABN 86 000 008 122

Founded as Sydney Sailors Home – 1863

2nd July 2021

Mr Simon Atkinson

Secretary Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

Via email: Simon.Atkinson@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Simon,

VACCINATION OF SEAFARERS

The Australian Mariners Welfare Society (AMWS) is a charity with a deep and abiding concern for the welfare of seafarers everywhere.

A critical issue at present is the need to ensure all seafarers are given the opportunity to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

It is widely acknowledged that In the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination of populations is a key step. Seafarers can be considered a unique population with their own needs, constraints and requirements for international travel.

To protect the health of seafarers and the general public, and to minimise disruptions to trade and global supply chains, vaccination of seafarers is considered essential. This is particularly important for Australia as we are so dependent on international shipping not only for imports and exports but domestic shipping services as well.

Vaccination of seafarers in their home countries is the preferred option but it is critical steps now be taken to permit access to vaccination for seafarers from all countries while they are in Australia.

AMWS is aware that last month Maritime Industry Australia Limited wrote to you expressing similar concerns. I draw your attention to the following excerpts from MIAL's letter:

Vessels and seafarers working in dedicated trade/work around the Australian coast should be treated as "Australian" regardless of their flag or nationality. The following would apply:

a. All seafarers working in these trades can obtain a vaccine in Australia.....

As soon as vaccine availability allows, Australia should undertake vaccination of as many foreign seafarers visiting Australia as practically possible in order to protect our shoreside workers and to ensure the ships can service Australia as required (i.e. not be turned away by a State due to a COVID case on board).

AMWS adopts and supports these views. We also note that other concerned industry bodies such as the Australian Logistics Council, the Freight & Trade Alliance and the Australian

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Peak Shippers Association, have all called on state and federal governments to recognise the criticality of freight and supply chain workers, by providing them immediate access to the COVID-19 vaccine. This is not only good policy to minimise the risk of interference to our national supply chains and the possibility of transmission of the virus into the broader community, but it is also a humanitarian benefit for the individual seafarers.

It is relevant that the International Chamber of Shipping has developed a “Roadmap for the Vaccination of International Seafarers” that provides a valuable guide on how issues around the vaccination of seafarers can be managed.

It is our request that the Federal Government address these concerns as expeditiously as possible.

Yours faithfully,

David Parmeter

Chair, Australian Mariners Welfare Society