Teachers' union calls for priority vaccination



The State School Teachers' Union of WA has today called for teachers to be made a priority for vaccination, in light of the State Government's decision to keep schools open during the four-day lockdown.

SSTUWA president Pat Byrne said:

"If the government is going to treat teachers as essential workers, then they need to protect them," she said.

"Teachers are stressed and confused as they are told they are essential workers yet have no priority access to vaccination.

"At this point in time, no-one knows how many teachers are vaccinated, and many teachers would not be eligible for vaccination, meaning they are being expected to go to work without protection.

"Teachers are understandably anxious about the mixed messages they're receiving from government by being told to front up to work when the rest of the community is being told to stay home.

"We have not been made fully aware of the medical reason for schools staying open.

"Airborne transmission of this more infectious variant has been stated as the reason for the lockdown, yet this threat is apparently not being taken seriously in schools, despite evidence that children are susceptible to this variant.

"We have already seen students in the eastern states contracting the Delta strain and schools shut down.

"Teachers want to be assured they will be safe and will not be taking a highly-contagious variant back to their families. Parents also need that reassurance."

The union is also in contact with the Department of Education around a number of issues including the continuation of extra cleaning in schools, support for vulnerable employees, enforcement of mask-wearing among students and access to school sites by parents and other visitors.

The union is also liaising with the department where individual schools are affected.

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