

Hon Michael Wood

Minister of Transport
Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety



17 January 2022

MOIA21-204

Annie Weston
fyi-request-17704-5f82402d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Annie

Thank you for your OIA request of 25 November 2021. Since you have not requested any information held by the Government, I am instead responding to your question as correspondence regarding my portfolio as Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety. Your message was concerning a perceived disregard of workers' rights if they have chosen not to be vaccinated.

The Medsafe report you referred to in your request clarifies that only one death could be attributed to vaccine induced myocarditis, with the others either unlikely to be attributable to the vaccination or with uncertain causes. While it is unfortunate that even one death is attributed to the vaccination, the benefits of the vaccination far outweigh the risks¹. Both reports you included show that there is occasionally unfortunate medical events following vaccinations, but this does not mean there is a causal link between the vaccination and any adverse medical events which occur closely following the administration of the vaccine.

People can still choose whether to be vaccinated. There is, however, some work that can only be carried out by people who have been vaccinated. This includes roles which involve interacting with vulnerable people or those who cannot be vaccinated (e.g. children). If workers in these roles choose not to be vaccinated, then that could have implications for continuing in their job. Employees who are unable to work due to their vaccination status are supported through a four-weeks' paid notice period.

Getting vaccinated is the most important thing we can do to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep our whānau and workplaces safe. The vaccine saves lives and means people are far less likely to get sick and end up in hospital if they get COVID-19. Getting as many people vaccinated as soon as possible is the key to keeping our communities safe and re-opening New Zealand.

I hope you have found this information useful.

Yours sincerely

¹ <https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/safety-report-36.asp>

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Wood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the "i" in "Wood".

Hon Michael Wood

Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety