



Transport Workers' Union of NSW

Richard Olsen State Secretary | P: 1800 729 909 | F: 02 8610 8099 | E: info@twunsw.org.au | W: www.twunsw.org.au

ABN: 77 710 588 395

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The Hon Andrew Constance MP
Minister for Transport and Roads

By email: office@constance.minister.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister,

I write with alarm at the NSW Government's failure to guarantee paid vaccination leave for bus drivers employed by private operators.

I note reports in the media today that the NSW Government will be offering two hours' paid vaccination leave to all public sector workers. However, as you know, the majority of bus drivers in NSW are not directly employed by the NSW Government.

It is deeply disappointing that the NSW Government has not included bus drivers employed by private operators in this vaccination leave announcement. We are also concerned that bus drivers are not being prioritised in the COVID vaccine rollout, despite the critical nature of the work they do to keep NSW moving.

It makes no sense for bus drivers in certain parts of Sydney to be given paid vaccination leave while the majority of drivers across NSW working for private operators miss out. This is particularly concerning when you consider that in the parts of Western and South West Sydney most affected by the current COVID outbreak, all bus services are run by private operators.

No bus driver should be put in a situation where they feel like they cannot afford to take time off work to get the COVID vaccine. I call on you to mandate that all bus operators with NSW Government contracts must extend paid vaccination leave entitlements to their drivers.

I also reiterate the TWU's previous calls for the NSW Government to implement formal paid pandemic leave arrangements for private bus company drivers if they test positive for COVID-19, or if they are identified as a close contact.

Of the 35 bus services listed as 'close contacts' on the NSW Health website (as of yesterday), 20 were on routes delivered by private operators. That's 20 bus drivers who have been forced into 14 days isolation without the safety net of formal, paid pandemic leave. Without formal pandemic leave arrangements, bus drivers run the risk of potentially being unable to provide for their families if a COVID-positive passenger boards their service.

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MINCHINBURY

22 John Hines Avenue,
Minchinbury NSW 2770
PO Box 54 Mount Druitt, NSW 2770
P: 1800 729 909 F: 02 8610 8099

NEWCASTLE

5 Canavan Drive,
Beresfield NSW 2322
P: 02 4969 3900
F: 02 4962 2614

WOLLONGONG

59 Princes Highway,
West Wollongong NSW 2500
P: 02 4229 1753
F: 02 4228 5129

I note that after a recent COVID exposure event at Parliament House, several Government Ministers – including you – were required to undergo 14 days isolation. I ask you to reflect on how that experience may have been different for you and your colleagues without the security of being paid as normal during that period.

I again urge you, as the top of the public transport supply chain, to immediately mandate that all bus operators with NSW Government contracts must extend paid vaccination leave and formal paid pandemic leave arrangements to their drivers.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Olsen
Secretary
Transport Workers' Union NSW

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22 John Hines Avenue,
Minchinbury NSW 2770
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P: 02 9912 0700 **F:** 02 9912 0777

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