

## **BANK WORKERS MUST HAVE PRIORITY FOR VACCINATIONS**

12 August 2021

Bank workers are on the front line and must be given priority for vaccination against Covid-19.

Finance Sector Union (FSU) National Secretary Julia Angrisano said retail banking workers were at a high risk of being exposed to Covid because of their face-to-face contact with large numbers of customers.

“Our members in bank branches are essential to the functioning of society and the economy and it is essential that they have access to vaccines,” Ms Angrisano said.

Ms Angrisano said she had written to Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt requesting priority access to vaccinations for bank workers, consistent with the advice of ATAGI to prioritise workers critical for societal functioning.

“Retail bank workers are facing a heightened risk due to the transmissibility of the Delta variant and the fact that they are exposed to large numbers of customers in shopping centres which are frequently listed as exposure sites by Health authorities.”

“Face-to-face banking is an essential service but the location of bank branches, in shopping centres or local shopping strips puts workers at risk.”

“There are more than 6000 retail banking sites nationally which leaves more than 35000 workers facing high risk settings as almost every retail bank branch is located in a local shopping strip or shopping centre”.

“The FSU estimates that majority of bank workers who are not able to work from home are located in high-risk settings”

“Thousands of people across the country are now in isolation, including a number of retail bank workers exposed to Covid-19 at work, with at least 20 retail bank branches currently listed as exposure sites in NSW.”

In her letter to Minister Hunt, Ms Angrisano said: “For this workforce to keep functioning during the lockdown and to keep community access to banking services, bank employees urgently need access to vaccines.”

She said banking workers were allowed to leave eight “hot spot” LGAs in South-western Sydney to attend work because they are classed as authorised workers, but are not currently eligible to be prioritised for a jab.

“We need to protect bank workers and maintain retail banking services to the community as a matter of urgency.”

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