



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **CATHOLIC SECTOR WARNS OF COVID BLINDSPOT IF COMMUNITY AGED CARE WORKERS LEFT OUT OF VACCINE MANDATE**

The largest grouping of non-government aged care providers urges National Cabinet to extend the mandatory vaccination of the aged care workforce to include workers providing home-based aged care and support services or risk leaving a COVID-19 blind spot open.

Catholic Health Australia, which represents not for profit residential and home-based aged care service providers, urges National Cabinet to close the loophole, noting that this has taken on increased urgency with the spread of the more infectious Delta variant.

CHA has confirmed that the mandate announced by the National Cabinet on Monday does not cover the around 150,000 workers who go into the community to care for around one million older Australians in their own homes. It only applies to workers in residential aged care homes.

CHA CEO Pat Garcia said the community aged care workforce needed protection just as much as residential aged care workers.

“Our workers need to feel confident in going out into the community just as the community needs to feel confident about letting them into their homes. If anything, given their role is to go out and about into the community these workers should be given absolute priority for protection. If we don’t do this then we risk opening up an obvious blind spot for COVID in our aged care.”

“I urge National Cabinet to extend mandatory COVID-19 vaccination to these workers and that they are not put to the back of the queue. These workers play a crucial role - for many of the most vulnerable in our community they are their connection to the outside world. We need to ensure that these workers and the older Australians who rely on their care and support are protected.”

Mr Garcia said his members stand ready to assist government in getting those vaccines to the workforce.