



The Hon Greg Hunt, MP
Minister for Health
M1.41, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au

22 February 2021

CC: State Health Ministers

Dear Minister

**Re: Australian Covid Vaccine National Roll-out Strategy
Critical Waste and Resource Recovery (WARR) Employees classification**

The Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia (WMRR) is the national peak body for the \$15.5 billion essential waste and resource recovery (WARR) industry. Nationally, we have more than 2,000 members representing over 500 entities that operate in a broad range of organisations, the three (3) tiers of government, universities, and NGOs. Our members are involved in the breadth and depth of WARR, engaging in activities fundamental to the success of the Australian economy including infrastructure investment, collections, manufacturing of valuable products from resource recovered materials, energy recovery, community engagement and education, and responsible management of residual waste.

Throughout the pandemic, waste and resource recovery staff have been on the frontline in responding to several COVID issues, not the least of which being increased volumes throughout lockdowns of household and supermarket waste material, and the increase in suspected clinical waste in aged care facilities to levels Australia has not seen before.

Critical to industry's success in safely managing these volumes, was the frontline workers who operated trucks, collected bins, and serviced premises, as well as operated relevant facilities throughout the pandemic, always ensuring public health and safety (including their own). As such, we are very keen for these *frontline* workers in the waste and resource recovery sector to be clearly identified as a **critical worker** for the purpose of the Vaccine National Roll-out Strategy, under part 1b.

WMRR would propose that *frontline* WARR workers would be limited to and defined as, those driving vehicles and collecting bins (all types), servicing premises (including aged care and medical facilities), as well as operating our WARR facilities (MRFs, incinerators (medical), organics, landfill, etc.), in order that those integral to the continued operation of this service to the public are prioritized given how crucial managing this material safely is to public health and amenity. Please note that industry is not looking for corporate/ office-based staff to be included within this definition, simply those that effectively service the broader community and keep both the material moving and gates open.

Can you please advise what further information you may require to progress this issue? Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss further at gayle@wmrr.asn.au or 0429076713. Many thanks for your consideration of this important issue.

Yours sincerely

Gayle Sloan
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Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia

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