

CORONAVIRUS — MANDATORY VACCINATIONS — TEACHERS

946. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to staff vaccination rates in schools and training institutions and to the Premier's response to a question asked by the member for Moore in the other place yesterday, 10 November 2021.

- (1) Has any modelling been undertaken to evaluate the likely attrition rate of teachers in schools due to vaccine mandates?
- (2) Can the minister clarify the number of teachers that the education system will be short when term 1 starts next year?
- (3) Similarly, has any modelling been undertaken to evaluate the likely attrition rate of TAFE lecturers?
- (4) Has the Department of Education developed any plan to attract and retain teachers in the event that teachers are forced to exit the profession due to vaccine mandates?
- (5) Can the minister provide some level of guarantee that students will have a teacher in front of every classroom when school resumes in 2022; and, if yes, will this result in larger class sizes or class cancellations under a worst-case scenario?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The Department of Education is in the process of surveying staff to understand the vaccination status across the state. This will inform planning and support for schools. Of the 26 536 school-based staff who have responded to date, 98.6 per cent are either fully vaccinated or intend to be by the required date; 77.8 per cent of respondents are fully vaccinated; 20.8 per cent are intending to be fully vaccinated by the required date; 0.8 per cent are not fully vaccinated and intend to apply for a medical exemption; and 0.6 per cent are not fully vaccinated and do not intend to apply for a medical exemption.
- (2) The Department of Education employs a range of attraction and retention strategies as part of its annual and ongoing staffing processes. These include, for example, the Leap program retraining for current teachers; limited registration for highly skilled individuals in areas of teacher workforce need; centrally managed recruitment pools; a streamlined process for recently retired teachers to be re-registered; Teach for Australia; and the OnCountry education program. In addition, the department operates a teacher flying squad to fill urgent vacancies around the state while a suitable teacher is sourced.
- (3) The Department of Training and Workforce Development and TAFE colleges are jointly planning for implementation of the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy, including consideration of potential implications for lecturing staffing levels.
- (4) See answer to (2).
- (5) Principals employ a range of strategies at the local level to ensure that there is a teacher in front of every class. They work to industrially agreed class sizes, manage enrolments and plan for class arrangements to best suit their local contexts, using the flying squad if necessary.