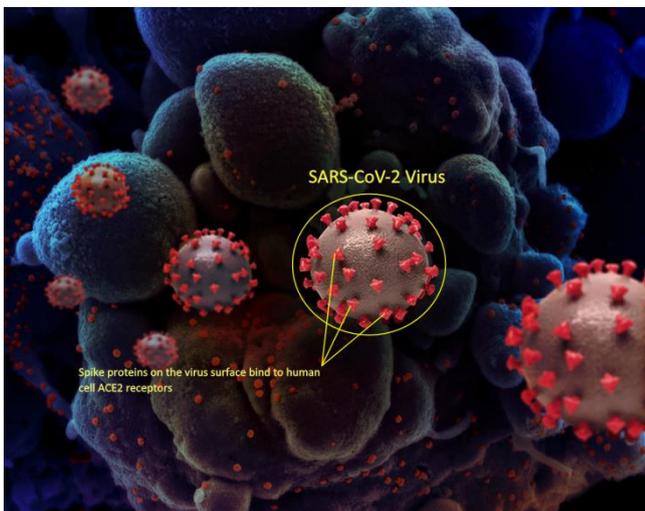


Greetings all. With a [COVID vaccine rollout](#) underway, today's Bulletin is about just that – the COVID Vaccine and how it will impact workplaces.

The Australian Government has detailed [a national rollout strategy](#) for the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines.

Currently, both the Federal and State Governments have stated that taking the vaccine is not mandatory for anyone – but what does that mean for workplaces?



What does the COVID Virus do?

COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Viruses cannot self-replicate and need a host cell to reproduce and cause infection. SARS-CoV-2 viruses are coated in 'spike proteins' that bind to the surface of many cells within the human body. When the spike protein and receptor proteins bind, the virus can enter the cell and [cause infection](#).

How do the COVID Vaccines work?

The [Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine uses mRNA technology](#), meaning it contains the mRNA of a harmless SARS-CoV-2 spike protein responsible for binding the virus to human cells. The vaccine helps the body's cells translate the mRNA and produce spike proteins which the body's immune system will respond to by developing antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Find more information [here](#).

[The Oxford/AstraZeneca viral vector vaccine](#) uses harmless viral non-SARS-CoV-2 cells to introduce the genetic sequence that codes for the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein into the body (as opposed to only the mRNA). This again arms your immune system to develop antibodies. Find more information [here](#).

Why is this important?

The COVID-19 vaccines incorporate either only the limited sequence of RNA or mRNA that codes for a single harmless spike protein - not all the virus's genetic information. This means that the vaccines cannot cause COVID-19 infection or make someone infectious.

The vaccine will help protect people by preventing or reducing symptoms of COVID-19 in the person who has received the vaccine. It is not yet known if the COVID-19 vaccines will stop a vaccinated person from being infected with the virus. So, good hygiene and handwashing practices, and social distancing are still necessary to stop the spread.

Will I need to take the vaccine?

Employers have a duty under the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws to eliminate, or if that is not reasonably practicable, minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

According to [Safe Work Australia](#) it is unlikely that a requirement for workers to be vaccinated will be reasonably practicable.

While vaccines are not mandatory, if you choose not to take the vaccine, you could be asked to perform work or to undertake certain tasks that do not pose a risk to a workplace.

[The Fairwork Ombudsman](#) has made available a very helpful [resource](#) that answers questions regarding the coronavirus vaccinations and the workplace. It is worth checking this website frequently to keep abreast of your obligations.

Vaccines save lives

It's worth remembering that Vaccines have a long history of saving lives. It is also worth noting that there is a lot of misguided information being spread about vaccines, so make sure you source information from a [reputable outlet](#).

For a number of reasons not everyone can have the COVID Vaccine, but for those who can – it is a way to reduce the severity of the illness, and together with good hygiene and social distancing measures will help stop broad scale lockdowns and disruptions.

Individual actions affect the lives of many others.

Stay Safe -CICA