

CSIRO Staff Association

Level 7 / 350 Queen Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia
Phone: +613 8620 6348
Email: csstaff@cpsu.org.au
Web: www.csirostaff.org.au

A section of the Community and Public Sector Union



29 September 2021

Katherine Paroz
Executive Director - People
CSIRO Clayton

CC : Dave.agnew@csiro.au, Trevor.heldt@csiro.au Rod.smith@csiro.au
Louise.jarman@cpsu.org.au

Reporting of Worker Vaccination Status

Dear Katherine,

The Staff Association has serious concerns about the content your email to Victorian CSIRO employees on 28 September 2021 under the subject line: *'Victorian COVID-19 Update'*

The email states that COVID-SMT is currently reviewing return to sites plans for Victoria, in line with the state government's roadmap and national plan.

We understand part of this review involves surveying staff to better understand the current rate of vaccination among employees, and the barriers to vaccination they may be facing.

Your email also advises staff of the decision by Monash University to mandate full vaccination of people visiting university campuses from 5 November. The email directs workers to upload their vaccination certificate to MyCSIRO by this date.

In both instances, we are concerned that CSIRO is taking steps to gather employee information without providing employees the appropriate guidance or transparency required by privacy law.

We note that the Australian Information Commissioner has recently published advice to employers on collecting information about employee vaccination status. A key element of this advice is that an employee's vaccination status is considered sensitive health information under the Privacy Act and higher privacy protections apply.

The key points of the OAIC advice are as follows:

- Employers can only collect information about employee's vaccination status in particular circumstances where the employee consents and the collection is reasonably necessary for your workplaces' functions and activities.
- You must have clear and justifiable reasons for collecting employee vaccination status information for it to be reasonably necessary. If you do not have clear and justifiable reasons, you should not collect vaccination status information.
- You can collect vaccination status information without consent only in circumstances where the collection is required or authorised by law (including a state or territory public health order or direction).
- Only the minimum amount of personal information reasonably necessary to maintain a safe workplace should be collected, used or disclosed.
- Vaccination status information should only be used or disclosed on a 'need-to-know' basis.
- You must inform employees about how their vaccination status information will be handled.
- Ensure you take reasonable steps to keep employee vaccination status and related health information secure.

We recognise that disclosure COVID vaccination status is a challenging and evolving workplace issue. As a representative of employees at CSIRO, the Association needs to make sure our members are fully informed of their rights and obligations surrounding disclosure sensitive health information under these circumstances. The CSIRO Staff Association supports vaccination for protection against COVID-19.

Noting that CSIRO has consultation obligations under both the Enterprise Agreement, and pursuant to health and safety legislation, we request that CSIRO immediately cease the solicitation of employee health information described in your email and schedule a time as soon as possible to meet with the Staff Association on this topic.

CSIRO Executive working together with the Staff Association offers the best opportunity to create safe and healthy workplaces in CSIRO.

We request a response by 30 September 2021 to schedule a meeting to commence genuine consultation on the issue of collection of information on the vaccination status of CSIRO workers.

Your sincerely,



Susan Tonks
Acting Secretary
CSIRO Staff Association