

Talkin' 'bout my Vaccination

A guide to vaccine conversations for
union activists

Getting vaccinated is a profound act of solidarity. By choosing to get our COVID vaccination as soon as we can, we protect ourselves, our families and those in our community who can't receive the vaccine.

Despite the political narrative, Australians overwhelmingly understand the need to get vaccinated. Much has been made of "Vaccine hesitancy", largely to distract from the failure of our Federal Government to secure sufficient vaccine supplies to meet Australia's need.

The Government's lacklustre response to the pandemic has allowed pockets of disinformation and disengagement to fester, particularly online. Workers in union can overcome reluctance amongst our comrades by sharing our stories and connecting with our values.

Don't assume vaccine hesitancy

The overwhelming majority of Aussies - 73% - want to get vaccinated as soon as they can. Only 11% say they won't be getting vaccinated, and the rest (14%) are unsure.

If folks around you haven't yet received their vaccine, it's probably because they have had trouble accessing it.

Arranging a vaccine appointment is particularly difficult for people in insecure work, people with caring responsibilities, people in regional areas with limited vaccine access, and people whose first language is not English. The union movement is campaigning for vaccination leave to help people overcome these barriers.

If your colleagues are having difficulties accessing the vaccine due to work schedules, raise the issue with your Health and Safety rep or union delegate.

Vaccine hesitant or vaccine curious?

Someone is not an anti-vaxxer or conspiracy theorist just because they express a degree of concern about the Covid vaccine.

Listen to their concerns. Consider the values they are expressing. These might include:

Purity: "I trust my body to fight the virus naturally" Try talking to this person about how amazing it is that vaccines give our bodies the tools or schema to fight off Covid. "I'm going to give my immune system every chance to fight this virus by getting the vaccine!"

Anti-authoritarianism: "I don't think the government should force me to get vaccinated". Provide this person with a rebel or activist frame for vaccination. "The sooner I'm vaccinated, the sooner I can campaign to get rid of this government!" Consider asking them to join the campaign for vaccination leave.

**Shaming people or mocking their values will get you nowhere.
Speak to them as a friend - don't lecture them.**

In an average workplace...



<-- Keen for vaccines!



<-- Your target audience!



<-- (Ignore this one, they're past convincing)

Woah there, professor

There are plenty of amateur epidemiologists and immunologists around these days, and you don't need to be one of them.

Unless you are a medical professional, you should not be giving out advice on vaccination. Instead, direct people with questions to their doctor, or to official sources such as:

australia.gov.au

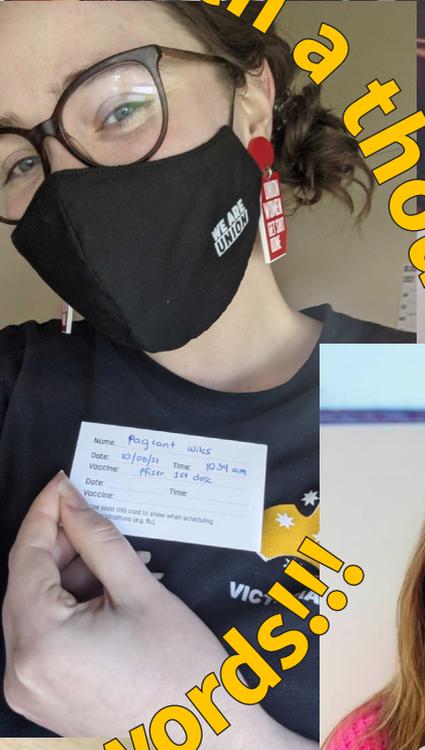
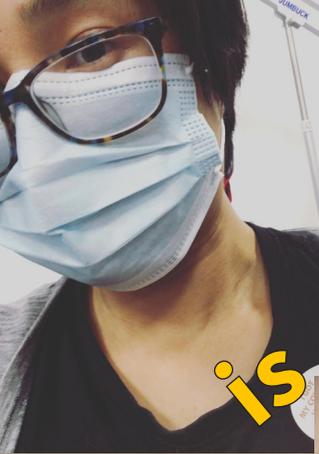
dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

abc.net.au/radio/programs/coronacast

You don't need to memorise any stats

Most people aren't motivated by stats and facts. People are motivated by their values, their group identity, and human connection.

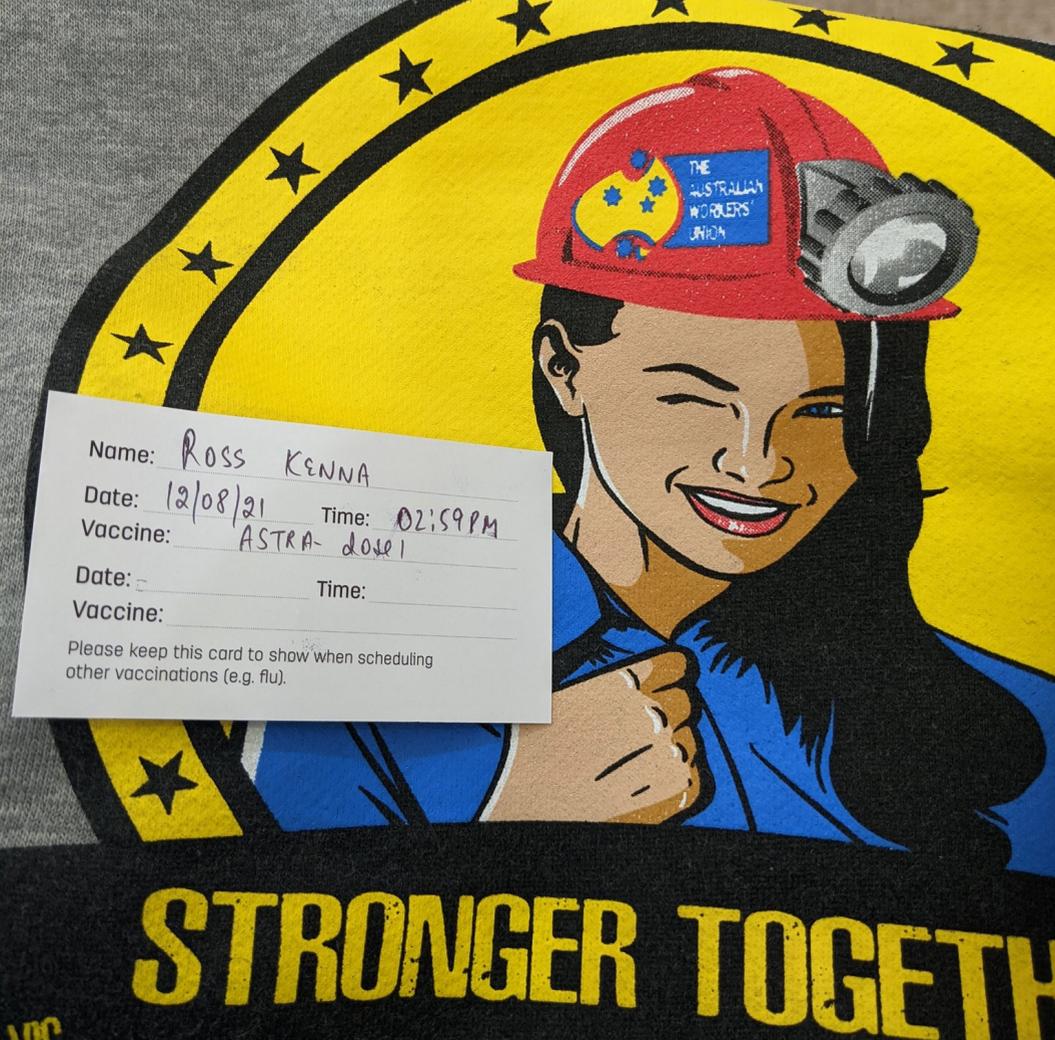
The most powerful argument for getting vaccinated is YOU.



is worth a picture
words!!!
A thousand

#VaxSolidarity

Share your selfie with this tag, and we'll share it on with other unionists to help build social proof and encourage unionists to get vaccinated!



The best way to persuade folks around you to get the vaccine is the humble Vaccine Selfie.

The news is bombarding Australians with constant images of angry anti-vax protesters. Sharing your vaccine selfie with friends in group chats or social media helps to normalise and humanise vaccination.

When people see that their real life connections are getting vaccinated, vaccination becomes less scary, less political, and less technical.

Tell your story



Even if you haven't been able to get the vaccine yet, you can tell the story of why you want to get vaccinated.

It doesn't have to be complex. You can simply say that you're worried about spreading Covid to a family member, or that you can't wait to travel overseas again. You could mention your connection to a healthcare worker who strongly endorses the vaccine.

The important thing is that you've shown that getting vaccinated is something people like you are doing.

Countering misinformation

Mythbusting - not as helpful as it sounds.

Repeating a false claim - even to debunk it - has consistently been found to be ineffective in changing attitudes to vaccines.

Talking about how unlikely you are to suffer severe side-effects from vaccines *still evokes a fear of side effects*. Telling people "the vaccine doesn't make you magnetic" simply exposes more people to a myth they may not have even heard.

Instead, get on the front foot! Lead with your argument, don't just respond to conspiracies!

Instead of:

"Vaccines do not contain microchips!"

Say "Vaccines are our path out of continual lockdowns!"

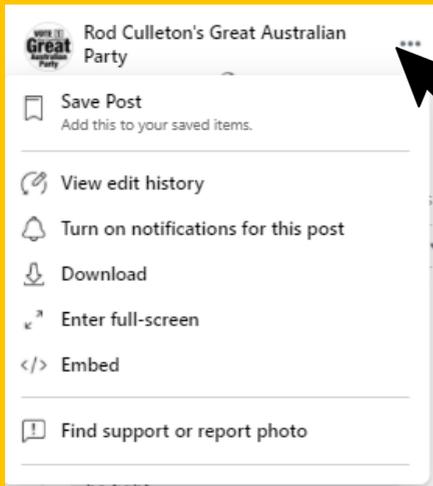
When communicating about vaccines, focus on the positive aspirations associated with vaccination; the end of lockdowns, the ability to travel overseas, parties, music festivals, the safety and health of our communities!

Fighting the infowars

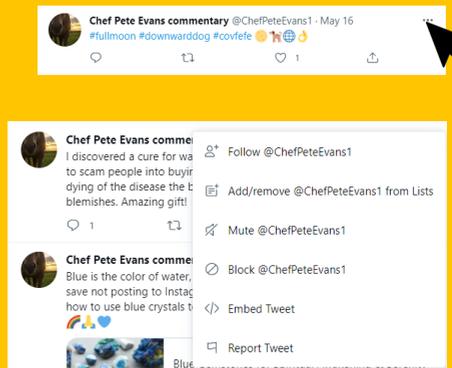
If you come across misinformation online, you should report the content:

On facebook

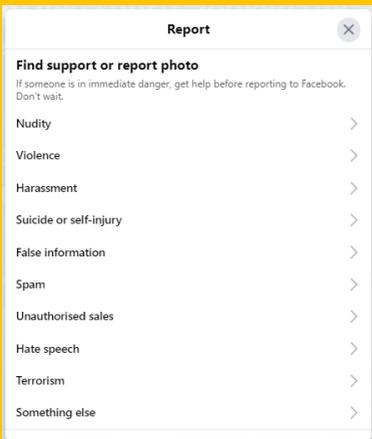
Click the ellipses (3 little dots) to the right of the post.



On twitter



If misinformation is posted by a friend or family member, you might choose to engage them. Realise that you are unlikely to change their mind or force them into a public retreat. All you can realistically hope for is to disrupt their sense that everyone agrees with them - burst their bubble!



1. Lead with a clear, relevant, sticky positive fact. If possible, explain how you know this fact to be true with personal experience.

2. Warn or signpost misinformation, ahead of any mention of the fallacy. Ideally, name the villain. Eg., "Craig Kelly and his ilk are out there spreading lies about x"

3. Point to the hidden agenda of those spreading misinformation: "Clive Palmer is desperately trying to seem relevant..."

4. Reiterate correct information, and connect to values

Eg.,
"Hi Julie. Covid vaccines have passed all the necessary trials we would demand of any new medicine, because our awesome scientist comrades can do anything - and fast! - if they're just given the funding they desperately need! Funny how when rich people are impacted, no problem is beyond solving!

You may have come across some misinformation out in the community - lies about the safety of the vaccine are being spread by celebrities like Jo Bloggs who want to make money selling bone broth.

But our health professionals - from nurses to scientists to aged care workers to allied health - are all

absolutely supportive of getting the vaccine as soon as you can. Our collective efforts to vaccinate ourselves and our families will make all our workplaces safe sooner. It's absolutely vital that we show up for frontline workers by getting vaccinated."

"Hi Barnaby. I'm hearing that you don't trust the Liberal Government, and I totally get you. But mate, Malcolm Turnbull couldn't even connect the NBN to my house, and you reckon they can build a microchip and inject it into every single Australian? I wish they were that smart! The reality is that vaccines are researched and manufactured by workers, not politicians.

You might have heard these sorts of fear-based messages floating around, but it's really important that as unionists we come together to fight against these anti-public-health campaigns. Right wingers are always trying to sow seeds of mistrust in the public service and our public health system, because they want to privatise everything and defund our collective supports. We can't let them divide us like that.

Health workers are all asking the rest of us to get vaccinated as soon as possible, because we'll all be safer when we've kicked this virus. I know I'm getting vaccinated as soon as I can."

Changing someone's mind is really hard. Set your expectations accordingly.

People change their mind when they have at least 2-3 conversations that challenge them. Allow them room to adjust their position gradually - and resist the temptation to gloat if you succeed!

More resources:

Information about keeping your workplace Covid Safe: covidsafeworkplace.org

Join the campaign for paid vaccination leave: megaphone.org.au/petitions/paid-vaccination-leave-for-all-workers

Join your union: join.australianunions.org.au

#VaxSolidarity

WE ARE UNION

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