



TIM READ MP

State Member of Parliament for Brunswick

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The Hon. Jenny Mikakos

Minister for Coordination of Health and Human Services: COVID-19

20 August 2020

Dear Minister,

Now that large numbers of staff in both public and private healthcare settings are infected with coronavirus, concerns have been raised about support for those who lose income due to time away from work.

As you know, it is difficult to determine whether a staff member was infected at work and this may make some staff ineligible for workers compensation if they do not have sufficient sick leave.

Health staff involved in face-to-face care of coughing or febrile patients are clearly at great risk of infection and I know the government has repeatedly expressed its appreciation of staff for taking this on. The last thing we want is for these staff to be worrying, as they care for the sick, whether they will lose income if they are infected, or isolating due to exposure.

Therefore, I strongly encourage the government to respond to the recent calls from health workers for presumptive rights to compensation for losses resulting from infection by SARS-CoV-2. Legislating or otherwise guaranteeing that infected health workers will not lose income would help to reduce some of the stress faced by nurses, paramedics, doctors and other health workers currently on the frontline.

On 23 April this year Greens Leader, Dr Samantha Ratnam, first read in the Legislative Council the Workplace Injury and Compensation (Covid-19 Protection) Amendment Bill 2020 to this effect. As you are aware the government recently set a precedent for this kind action by legislating for presumptive rights to compensation for certain cancers in firefighters.

I respectfully request that the government commits to the Introduction of a similar bill, or a commitment to support Dr Ratnam's bill through the Parliament.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Read'.

Dr Tim Read

State Member for Brunswick