

I am writing to you today as your constituent to bring light to an urgent issue affecting many Australians, myself included. I am a 40+ year old professional who, prior to my COVID-19 vaccination in October 2021, led an incredibly blessed life. I was fit, active and healthy with no underlying health issues and no family history of cardiac or neurological issues. I have worked extensively in large private and public organisations as a consultant for over 20 years, my career is both fast-paced and intensely detailed oriented. Like many Australians, I believed that rolling up my sleeve was the right thing to do for my family, community, and country. I never believed I was at any risk of injury. Five days following my second Pfizer vaccination I had flutters in my chest. These episodes increased in pain level, intensity and frequency and fifteen days post-vaccination I was taken to the Hospital via ambulance and diagnosed with pericarditis, inflammation of the sac surrounding my heart.

After speaking to my GP and cardiologist, I admit I fully expected to recover from this quickly as I was made to feel like this was just a minor, short-lived ailment and I was a fit and healthy patient who was very committed to their recovery. However, my expectation of a quick recovery has not been my experience. At the peak of my injury, I was in constant debilitating pain, I suffered severe shortness of breath and exhaustion that was so extreme that it is impossible to describe. I degenerated neurologically to the point where I could not remember basic words and forgot the names of my own close family members. As a person whose career relies solely on cognitive ability, I cannot describe how soul-destroying this degeneration has been. As a result of this decline, in January 2022 I was left with no other option but to take unpaid medical leave. Six months post my pericarditis diagnosis I experienced a 'second wave' of injury in the form of neuropathy, facial drooping, loss of sensation in my hands, face and feet and tinnitus. 16 months on, I am still unable to work full time, and as I work on contract with no form of paid leave, this means the financial impact on my family has been substantial. I also do not qualify for any government support. At my last calculation, my injury, with loss of income and medical expenses has cost my family more than \$260,000. There is not a day where I am not adversely impacted by this event in some way. While I am hopeful that this condition will improve with time, I am becoming increasingly concerned that this may become something I will have to deal with for the rest of my life. This is both terrifying and heartbreaking in equal measure.

As a result of my injury, I have come to know many other Australians in the exact same situation I face. We are suffering at a level never witnessed before in history. While other countries are taking steps to support their vaccine-injured constituents, Australia is sadly lacking in every single area that matters.

I am asking for your proactive attention and support in the following areas:

1. Acknowledgement

The government anticipated there would be a small percentage of people for whom the COVID-19 vaccination would be damaging, the creation of the *Covid-19 Vaccine Claims Scheme* demonstrates this. What has been alarming and incredibly damaging for those of us caught in the crossfire has been the absolute dismissal of our conditions at every single level of Government. There needs to be an open and honest dialog on the very real experience of vaccine-injured Australians with the view to improving the likelihood of recovery. There is no question that we exist, however, our stories are used as a means to polarise debate which has exacerbated the absolute lack of support we have received from every institution we had faith in. We exist, we need urgent and immediate assistance, people are suffering, and no one is doing a single thing to help improve our situation.

2. Financial Support

The *Covid-19 Vaccine Claims Scheme* is currently unfit for purpose. The process is extraordinarily complex and places an extreme burden on desperately unwell people. In my case, I was diagnosed with pericarditis which meets the current eligibility criteria. However,

despite presenting at Emergency on three separate occasions, I was never admitted to hospital. I've since come to realise that it is rare for pericarditis sufferers to be hospitalised. This means that even though I have been significantly affected by my vaccination for over a year now I am ineligible to submit a claim unless a medical practitioner is willing to sign a waiver. The hospitalisation criteria is unnecessary. Instead, eligibility should consider the length of time a person's life has been or will be, affected. It seems unjust that a person who has pericarditis, is hospitalised overnight but then recovers within a short timeframe is eligible for compensation, whereas I am not. Also, the scheme only allows claimants to submit one claim (unless there is a serious change in circumstances), which means people are waiting until they are recovered or are on the precipice of recovery before they apply. While the scheme allows claimants to include future lost income, no one knows how long they will be injured. In my wildest nightmares, I never expected to be still suffering 16 months after my vaccination. These over-zealous stipulations place a significant ongoing financial burden on vulnerable people. The scheme should look to offer injured Australians ongoing payments to supplement or replace lost income as well as approve the payment of lump sum amounts for medical expenses.

3. Research, Treatment and Advice

There is a definitive lack of medical knowledge and treatment options for those suffering from vaccine injuries. Even when faced with a pericarditis diagnosis, which is a "known" side effect, many, including myself, are not reacting as expected to standard treatment options. My cardiologist no longer knows what to do and my neurologist was clear that it's too early for them to make any recommendations on what can be done to assist with vaccine injuries. We need urgent attention in the form of adequately funded research, we also need a multi-disciplinary task force to be created where advisory teams are tasked with staying abreast of leading-edge international treatments so that they can advise GPs and specialists who are faced with treating the wide spectrum of adverse reactions. Public hospital facilities that are showing promise for vaccine injury should be considered for immediate use. For example, hyperbaric oxygen therapy is one of the therapies that are helping many injured, including myself, but the private treatment cost and lack of available facilities are incredibly prohibitive for most Australians. This is a simple change that could save thousands of people from suffering.

My greatest hope is that my letter can serve as a reminder to you that for some everyday Australians, the COVID-19 vaccinations did incredible harm. The subsequent treatment we have received from the media, doctors, and government officials in the face of extremely debilitating, life-changing injuries has been as traumatising as the injury itself. I ask that you bear this in mind when you address any debate regarding vaccines and vaccine injury. I also ask that you be a proactive voice of change for a maligned and mistreated minority group of vulnerable Australians. Australia has always prided itself on the virtue of 'a fair go' including compassion for those in need. We can all agree that to date compassion has been non-existent for vaccine-injured Australians.

I am more than willing to discuss any details surrounding my injury and the treatment I have witnessed over the past 16 months in the hope that it brings about change. I look forward to hearing from you with details on what action you have taken or are planning to take to address these issues as my elected representative.