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## UWA researchers to investigate COVID-19 vaccine mandates to guide future policies

**Kellie Balaam** | The West Australian

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✉ Kellie Balaam



📷 UWA researchers will investigate the impact that COVID vaccine mandates had during the height of the pandemic through a large-scale project believed to be the first of its kind. Credit: AAP



UWA researchers will investigate the impact that COVID vaccine mandates had during the

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Lead researcher Associate Professor Katie Attwell, from UWA's School of Social Sciences

Other key aspects of the project will include identifying issues surrounding compliance and explore how policymakers should communicate about mandate addition and removal.

It will also help researchers understand the social, financial, and career impacts of mandates and advise on the legal and ethical disputes mandates generate.



The collaboration with decision-makers will guide policy for future COVID waves and vaccines, future pandemic preparedness and routine adult and childhood immunisation programs.

Associate Professor Attwell said the project would be the first of its kind to apply multiple methodologies to track the impacts and experiences of vaccine mandates anywhere, for any vaccine.

“I am very excited about collaborating with the amazing team on this grant, who work

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Professor Atwell expected to find mandates changed some people’s vaccination behaviour.

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“It will be important to speak to these people in the longer term to understand what has happened to their views. We also want to understand how people view the removal of mandates.”

“I think it will be clear that people take the message from the government that getting vaccinated is no longer so critical. We will be helping governments to create better messaging around mandates and mandate removal so that the importance of vaccinating doesn’t get diminished when the mandate ends.”

The mandatory vaccination policy was introduced in December 2021 in a phased approach.

Premier Mark McGowan said it had been extremely effective in protecting WA and helping achieve the nation’s highest vaccination rate.

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The controversial policy was scrapped in WA in June last year for most workforces after Mr McGowan declared the new Omicron wave passed its peak.

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“The researchers involved in this project have expertise in a number of relevant areas including policy, communication studies, epidemiology, economics, medicine, law, sociology, psychology and ethics,” she said.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how important it is not just to develop vaccines, but to understand how to translate vaccine availability to health policy improvements.”

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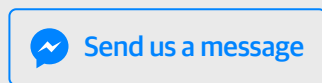
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