

MEDIA STATEMENT

MINERALS COUNCIL SOUTH AFRICA APPLAUDS THE MINING INDUSTRY'S 300,000 VACCINATION MILESTONE IN ITS COVID-19 BATTLE

Johannesburg, 24 November 2021. The mining industry has surpassed the 300,000 milestone for fully and partially vaccinated employees and contractors as the year draws to a close. The Minerals Council South Africa urges all employees to get the jab to protect their families and friends at the start of the fourth wave of Covid-19 infections.

With 300,779 vaccinations, more than two thirds of the industry's 450,000 employees and contractors are fully (80%) and partially (20%) vaccinated as the sector moves steadily towards its target of 80% vaccinations level. The industry hit the 200,000- vaccination mark on 23 September 2021.

"We have done well in reaching this significant milestone, but we still have some way to go to reach the target we set for ourselves. Like the rest of the country, achieving a stretch target was never going to be easy, but we are working hard with the industry and our stakeholders to get there," says Dr Thuthula Balfour, head of health at the Minerals Council.

"It is more important than ever for people to be vaccinated as there are growing concerns that the fourth wave of infections is not far off. It is vital employees are vaccinated before going home for the year-end break to keep themselves, their families and friends safe," she says.

A number of mining companies have achieved vaccination levels in excess of 80% of their workforces, showing what can be done. The Minerals Council congratulates these companies and their leadership for their success in the fight against Covid-19.

The government set a target of 70% vaccinations by year end and is experiencing the same difficulties as the mining industry in convincing people that Covid-19 remains a real and present threat, and to have themselves vaccinated especially as the country shows signs of increasing infections.



The Minerals Council and its members, which account for about 95% of the industry's workforce, have launched various campaigns during 2021 to boost vaccination levels, including aligning itself with the national Vooma Vaccination drive initiated by the government in October. We are working closely with the Departments of Health and Mineral Resources & Energy, and with organised labour.

Member companies regularly share experiences through meetings at the Minerals Council on effective initiatives and plans that have proved successful to improve vaccination levels, including bringing vaccines to the shaft or workplace instead of relying on employees to visit clinics, giving the day off for those vaccinated on that day and other incentives.

Industry initiatives are driven by mining CEOs and their leadership teams in the interest of saving lives and livelihoods. Roger Baxter, Minerals Council CEO says the industry started preparing for a vaccine roll-out in February this year, using its extensive in-house infrastructure and resources as well as years of experience in effectively treating tuberculosis and HIV.

There are now 75 sites used by mining companies to vaccinate employees, their dependants and community members.

Baxter acknowledged the leadership role played by organised labour - the Association of Construction and Mineworkers Union (AMCU), the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Solidarity and UASA - in advocating for vaccinations amongst employees and supporting the company-based programmes.

"We must continue to be vigilant and practice all the non-medical interventions that we have developed since the start of the pandemic," he says.

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For further queries:

Allan Seccombe

Tel: 064 650 4636

Email: aseccombe@mineralscouncil.org.za

Web: www.mineralscouncil.org.za