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COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAM

ACT Update - Issue 1: January 2021

ACT planning for COVID-19 Vaccination Program

A COVID-19 Vaccination Program implementation plan for the ACT is currently being negotiated and developed between ACT Health and the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy Taskforce Division, Department of Health. During phase one of the vaccination program, supply and distribution will be the responsibility of, and closely monitored by the Australian Government. As there will be initial limited supplies of the vaccine, priority groups (as illustrated in Australia's Epidemiology and COVID-19 Vaccine Roadmap) will be offered the vaccine first at vaccination sites identified within the ACT COVID-19 Vaccination Program Implementation Plan.

ACT Health has been working collaboratively with the Australian Government and other States and Territories to discuss planning for the rollout of a COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Although finer details of when General Practices may be administering the COVID-19 vaccine are unknown, there are still many things that can be done to prepare for the rollout of COVID-19.

How can ACT Immunisation Providers prepare for the COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Australia Immunisation Register (AIR)

- Ensure logon to AIR is up to date
- Ensure all vaccines are recorded onto AIR

Participate in education sessions specific to COVID-19 Vaccination Program when available

- Complete and/or encourage staff to complete, a recognised immunisation course
- Ensure Nurse Immunisers have completed a recognised course (see ACT Health website for further information on *Nurse and Midwife Immunisers*).
- Vaccine storage and cold chain management education module (already live on HETI).
- NCIRS shoulder injury related to vaccine administration presentation (already live on NCIRS website).
- Anaphylaxis education at *ASCIA*

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- eLearning platform on vaccination procedures (already live on MVEC website).
- Regularly visit the Department of Health website and the *COVID-19 ACT website* to stay up to date with news about COVID-19

Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI)

- Ensure you have an up to date process for reporting all adverse events to the Health Protection Service
- Ensure *SmartVax* and *Vaxtracker* are placed onto your medical software **(these are to assist with adverse event reporting and do not replace the current procedure to report AEFI's in the ACT).**

Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

The Australian *COVID-19 Vaccination Policy* was endorsed by National Cabinet on 13 November 2020. The policy outlines the approach to providing COVID-19 vaccines in Australia including the roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government and each State and Territory.

The Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy can be found online at: *https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/11/australian-covid-19-vaccination-policy_1.pdf*

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) COVID-19 Working Group

The ATAGI COVID-19 Working Group has been established as the appropriate committee to provide evidence-based advice on immunisation policies, program, and priorities for the delivery of a vaccination program. The working group will provide advice to the Australian Government on the effective and equitable use of COVID-19 vaccines available in Australia.

The group is led by an executive group and has 3 subgroups:

- Vaccine utilisation and prioritisation
- Vaccine distribution and program implementation
- Vaccine safety, evaluation, monitoring and confidence.

Further information on the roles and responsibilities of the ATAGI COVID-19 Working Group can be found online at: *https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-technical-advisory-group-on-immunisation-atagi-covid-19-working-group#role*

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Vaccines

The Australian Government has advance purchase agreements for the supply of three COVID-19 vaccines if they are proved to be safe and effective. At this stage, to complete a course the same vaccine brand must be used for both dose 1 and 2.

Pfizer/BioNTech

- 2 doses required
- Commonwealth has purchased 10 million doses
- Store at -70 degrees
- Provisionally approved by the *Therapeutic Goods Administration* (TGA) on 25 January 2020 https://www.tga.gov.au/media-release/tga-provisionally-approves-pfizer-covid-19-vaccine

Astra Zeneca

- 2 doses required
- Commonwealth has purchased 53.8 million doses
- Store at 2-8 degrees
- Awaiting TGA approval

Novavax

- 2 doses required
- Commonwealth has purchased 51 million doses
- Store at 4-8 degrees
- Undergoing stage 3 clinical trials and awaiting TGA approval

The University of Queensland/CSL vaccine has not been approved by the Australian Government to progress to phase 2/3 clinical trials.

The Australian Government has also joined the COVAX facility which enables purchase of vaccine doses for Australia as they become available.

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1.5m

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What we know about the vaccines

- Multidose vials
- Two doses (must be same vaccine)
- Vaccine specific training will be provided
- Each vaccine has a different expiry after opening
- Each vaccine will have a different dosage
- Each vaccine may have unique temperature storage requirements (some may be frozen)
- Efficacy data for each vaccine varies
- Reconstitution requirements vary for each vaccine

Australia's Epidemiology and COVID-19 Vaccine Roadmap

Australia's COVID-19 Vaccine National Rollout Strategy was published on the 7th of January 2021. The strategy identifies:

- Priority populations for vaccination, and the phases in which vaccines will be provided in Australia.
- Details for how vaccines will reach frontline healthcare workers, quarantine and border workers, and aged and disability care residents and workers.
- Initial locations, across Australia, at which vaccines will be administered.

Phase 1a of the COVID-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy is anticipated to be predominantly the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine with commencement expected in early 2021. See the image below for a list of the prioritisation groups for each phase.

Phase 1b Expressions of interest for general practices to participate in Australia's COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out have been made available through the Australian Government Department of Health Website: *https://www.health.gov.au/news/covid-19-vaccine-rollout-primary-care-participation-in-phase-1b-call-for-expressions-of-interest-from-general-practices*
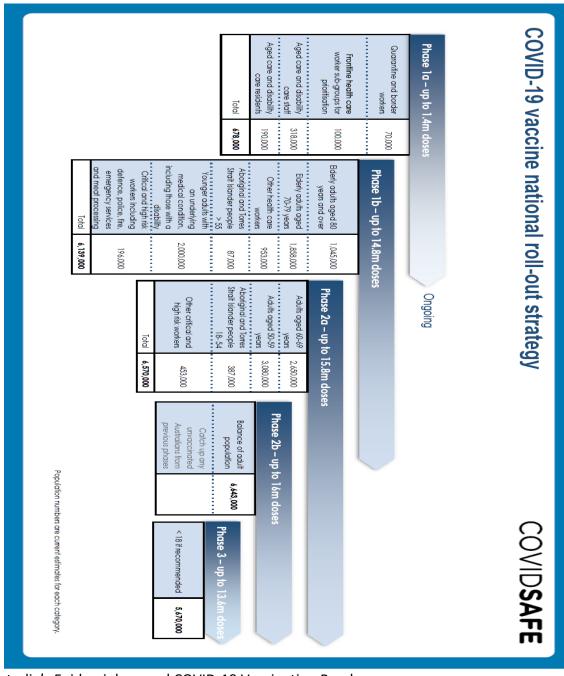
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COVID-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy

COVIDSAFE

Phase 1a – up to 1.4m doses — Ongoing

Quarantine and border workers	70,000
Frontline health care worker sub-groups for prioritisation	100,000
Aged care and disability care staff	318,000
Aged care and disability care residents	190,000
Total	**678,000**

Phase 1b – up to 14.8m doses

Elderly adults aged 80 years and over	1,045,000
Elderly adults aged 70-79 years	1,858,000
Other health care workers	953,000
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people > 55	87,000
Younger adults with an underlying medical condition, including those with a disability	2,000,000
Critical and high risk workers including defence, police, fire, emergency services and meat processing	196,000
Total	**6,139,000**

Phase 2a – up to 15.8m doses

Adults aged 60-69 years	2,650,000
Adults aged 50-59 years	3,080,000
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 18-54	387,000
Other critical and high risk workers	453,000
Total	**6,570,000**

Phase 2b – up to 16m doses

Balance of adult population	6,643,000
Catch up any unvaccinated Australians from previous phases	

Phase 3 – up to 13.6m doses

< 18 if recommended	5,670,000

Population numbers are current estimates for each category.

Australia's Epidemiology and COVID-19 Vaccination Roadmap -
https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/01/australia-s-epidemiology-and-covid-19-vaccine-roadmap-australia-s-covid-19-vaccine-national-rollout-strategy.pdf

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1.5m **Keep your distance**

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Further information

COVID-19 vaccines: Frequently asked questions (NCIRS) - *https://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions*

COVID-19 Vaccine and Treatment Strategy (Department of Health) - *https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccine-and-treatment-strategy*

Australian COVID-19 Vaccination policy - *https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australian-covid-19-vaccination-policy*

Preliminary advice from ATAGI on general principles for the COVID-19 vaccination program - *https://www.health.gov.au/news/preliminary-advice-from-atagi-on-general-principles-for-the-covid-19-vaccination-program*

Australia's vaccine agreements - *https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/about-covid-19-vaccines/australias-vaccine-agreements*

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