



18 February 2021

Dear Wintringham Resident

**Re: Covid-19 vaccinations & keeping informed**

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As we think back to this same time last year, who could have imagined just how challenging the year ahead would be. Aside from continuing to follow safety measures which have now become our 'new normal' like physical distancing, staying home if you have any symptoms, and getting tested immediately; Australia will soon start the mass roll-out of the approved Covid-19 vaccines.

To find out at what stage you can expect to have the vaccine made available to you, please see the attached Covid-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy. The first vaccine roll-out (Phase 1a) will commence from Monday 22 February and will then progressively continue over the following months for priority groups as nominated by the Government.

We strongly encourage everyone who is eligible, to get vaccinated, as this is another crucial line of defence in battling this highly contagious and potentially deadly virus. Vaccines save lives.

Please take the time to inform and familiarise yourself with the many frequently asked questions being raised about the vaccine. The following OPAN (Older Person's Advocacy Network) one hour webinar, is essential viewing for everyone: <https://bit.ly/3qpdYwq> (simply type the blue web link into your computer's internet search engine and press enter) or call OPAN on **1800 237 981** (available 6am – 10pm seven days per week), to discuss your coronavirus concerns. Our Support Workers and Tenancy staff have also been given this video to view.



The Federal Government's Covid-19 vaccine information is also useful reading: [www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines](http://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines) *(simply type the blue web link into your computer's internet search engine and press enter)* or freecall **1800 020 103**. Information is being updated regularly, so we encourage you to look at the website weekly if you can.

Wintringham want you to have factual information about the vaccine. We will keep you updated as we receive more information about the commencement of the vaccination program for our tenants. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to speak with your Wintringham Support Worker, or your Doctor.

In addition, given the latest Covid-19 restrictions in place across Victoria, it's clear that the situation can change very quickly. So please check here online: [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus) *(simply type the blue web link into your computer's internet search engine and press enter)* or call the Victorian Coronavirus hotline on **1800 675 398** for updates and information about current restrictions and rules.

Let's continue to do the best we can to keep you - our client, your loved ones, our staff and the community safe.

Thanking you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



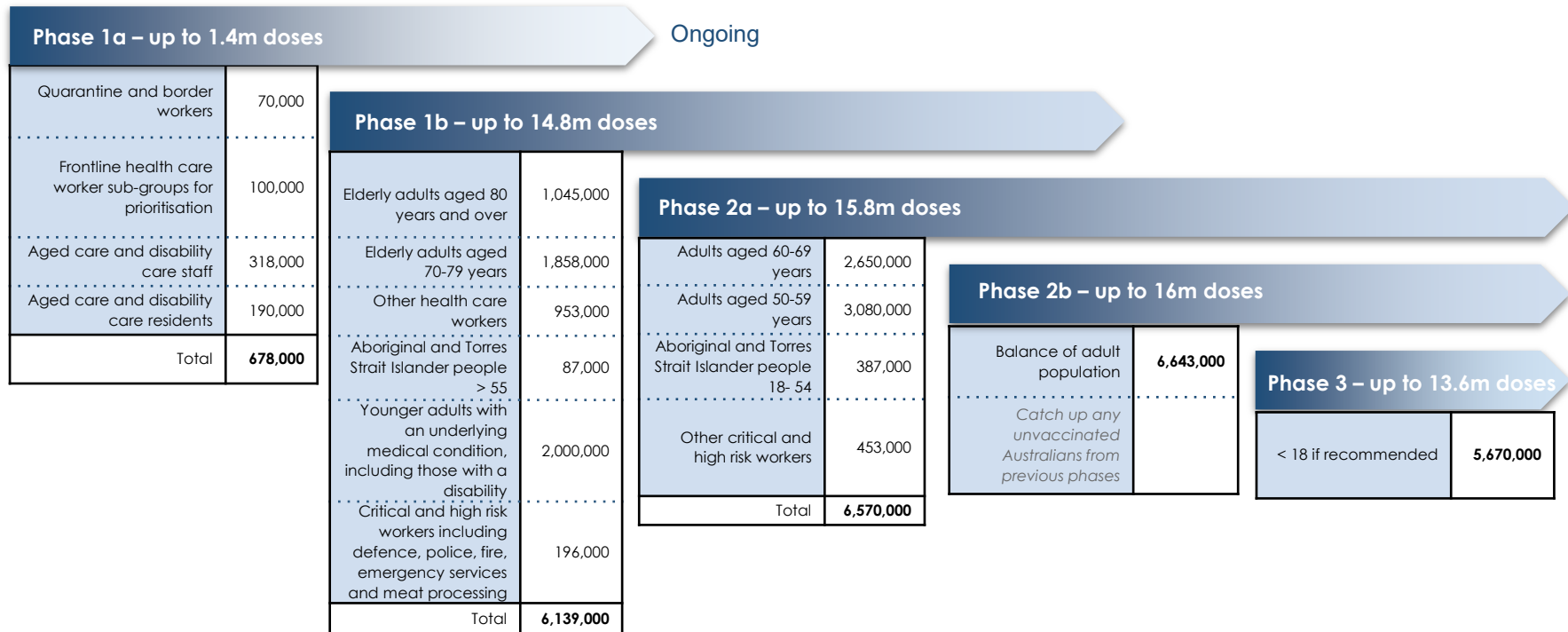
Michael Deschepper  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Enc. Covid-19 vaccine - Frequently Asked Questions



# COVID-19 vaccine national roll-out strategy

COVIDSAFE



Population numbers are current estimates for each category.

# Covid-19 vaccine – Frequently Asked Questions

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## Vaccine safety and efficacy

### Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?

Any COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Australia will be safe and effective. Before a COVID-19 vaccine is approved for use in Australia, it must pass the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) rigorous assessment and approval processes - see: [www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines](http://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines) This includes assessment of the vaccine's safety, quality and effectiveness.

### How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?

The Australian Government is following rigorous regulatory procedures to ensure that any vaccines supplied in Australia are effective and safe for use. Advice on the expected effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine will be available from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au) as vaccines are approved for use in Australia. For further information, visit the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance: [www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions](http://www.ncirs.org.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-frequently-asked-questions)

### Does the COVID-19 vaccine contain the live COVID-19 virus or can I get sick with COVID-19 from the vaccine?

None of the vaccines currently being reviewed for use in Australia contain a live virus that can cause COVID-19. This means that the COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

### What are the potential side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?

As part of regulatory assessment, the Therapeutic Goods Administration considers information about possible side effects. For a vaccine to be registered for use in Australia, the benefits must outweigh the risks. All vaccines can cause side effects. Usually any side effects are mild and temporary.

Clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines have reported temporary side effects typical of vaccines, such as pain or redness at the injection site, as well as mild to moderate fever, tiredness, headache, muscle aches and chills. These side effects may be more common after the second dose.

A small number of people may have more severe side effects—defined as side effects affecting a person's ability to do their normal daily activities. These side effects usually only last a day or two after getting the vaccine. Monitoring of vaccine-related side effects will continue after a COVID-19 vaccine has been registered.

### Will the COVID-19 vaccines be effective on new variants of the virus?

Clinical trials, so far, are showing that the COVID-19 vaccines induce antibodies that are likely to be able to respond to most minor changes in the virus' gene sequence. Australia will continue to closely monitor international developments regarding the COVID-19 variants of concern and will continue to perform careful genetic examination of the virus found in local cases.

## What is herd immunity, and will the COVID-19 vaccines achieve this?

Herd immunity occurs when enough people have developed sufficient immunity to prevent the disease easily being transmitted from one person to another. Even before herd immunity is achieved, most of the population may be able to be protected from developing symptoms from COVID-19 if the vaccine is sufficiently protective against disease, and enough people in the population are vaccinated. Protection from disease is not the same as protection from infection, or prevention of transmission.

Achieving herd immunity against COVID-19 is a long-term goal. It will require a large proportion of the population to be vaccinated. The exact proportion that will need to be vaccinated to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus depends on the characteristics of the vaccine, such as the vaccine's ability to stop transmission, and the duration of protection provided. It also depends on how many people are able to be vaccinated. We may need to wait for a vaccine that is able to be given to children, pregnant women, and people with some medical conditions, for sufficient coverage in the Australian population for herd immunity to be achieved. We also need to carefully monitor the COVID-19 virus to see whether any of the variants of concern are able to escape from the protection that the COVID-19 vaccines provide.

As we learn more about the characteristics of COVID-19 vaccines and how well they protect against the disease and spread of the virus, many studies will be done to monitor how much impact the vaccines have and whether herd immunity is being developed over time. What we do know is that both the Pfizer/BioNTech and the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines show they are very good at protecting against severe illness and death.

## Vaccine availability and prioritisation

### When will COVID-19 vaccines be available to people?

The Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has been provisionally approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for individuals aged 16 years and older. This vaccine is expected to be available in a phased rollout from late February 2021. As doses will initially be limited, the vaccine will be first made available to people who are most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 or who have the highest risk of being exposed to, or spreading the virus. The TGA is reviewing other potential COVID-19 vaccines for use in Australia and if approved, a COVID-19 vaccine is expected to be available to the general population later in 2021. As each person will

require two doses of the vaccine, it will take time for every person who is able to have the vaccine to be adequately immunised against the virus.

### Who will receive the COVID-19 vaccine first?

For information about who will receive the vaccine, visit the Australian Department of Health website: [www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/when-will-i-get-a-covid-19-vaccine](http://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/when-will-i-get-a-covid-19-vaccine)

As doses will initially be limited, the vaccine will be first made available to people who are most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 or who have the highest risk of being exposed to, or spreading, the virus.

The first people to receive a COVID-19 vaccine will include:

- Health care workers working in locations with a higher risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19, such as emergency departments, COVID-19 testing clinics, and COVID-19 wards
- Staff working in designated quarantine facilities
- Residents and staff of residential aged and disability care facilities.

### Who is deciding who gets access to the COVID-19 vaccine first?

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has provided advice to the Australian Government on which groups should be prioritised for the first doses for possible COVID-19 vaccination in Australia. The advice provided to the Australian Government is consistent with guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO).

## Eligibility, cost and access

### Will the COVID-19 vaccine be free?

The vaccine will be free for all Australian citizens, permanent residents, and most visa-holders.

### If I'm not an Australian Citizen will I be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Permanent residents and most visa-holders will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

### How will I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

As there will initially be limited doses of the vaccine available in Australia, the priority groups in Phase 1a will be offered the vaccines at designated vaccination hubs, or in residential aged care or disability care settings.

Vaccination hubs will be located at selected public hospitals with the required storage, vaccine handling and administration capacity. Once more doses become available, it is expected that one or more COVID-19 vaccines will be available for the

wider population through usual immunisation providers, including GP practices, GP respiratory clinics and Aboriginal health services.

### **Will COVID-19 vaccination be recommended for everyone?**

Once a COVID-19 vaccine is generally available, most people in the Australian community will be able to be immunised against COVID-19. There may be some groups of people for whom vaccination may not be recommended, such as people with specific medical conditions. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is reviewing available data on the potential COVID-19 vaccines and will provide recommendations on who should and should not be vaccinated.

### **How many times will I need to have the COVID-19 vaccine?**

For the COVID-19 vaccines that are likely to be available in Australia, each person will need to receive two doses of the vaccine to be adequately immunised against COVID-19.

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory in Australia?**

Australians have a great record in being immunised. The COVID-19 vaccine will be voluntary, universal and free. When a safe and effective vaccine is available in Australia for COVID-19, the Government aims to have as many Australians as possible choose to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

If people choose not to have a COVID-19 vaccine, this will not affect their family's eligibility for Family Tax Benefit Part A or childcare fee assistance which only includes National Immunisation Program vaccines for those aged younger than 20.

It is possible that in future, vaccination against COVID-19 might become a requirement for travel to certain destinations or for people working in certain high-risk workplaces. If this becomes the case, there will be exemptions in place for people who are unable to be vaccinated.

## **Influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations**

### **Will the COVID-19 vaccine also protect me against the flu?**

The COVID-19 vaccine will not protect you against influenza (flu). It will be important to get a flu vaccination next flu season. Flu vaccination reduces your chances of getting influenza, which means it reduces the risk of you having influenza at the same time as a COVID-19 infection. Being vaccinated against the flu also helps to protect others, particularly people who are more vulnerable to infections (e.g. elderly people).

Follow the guidance of your GP or health professional about when is best to schedule each dose of the COVID-19 vaccine (two doses in total) and the flu vaccine.