

---

## **Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to COVID-19 for People with Disability**

### **Meeting 24 January 2023 – Summary of Outcomes**

---

Committee members with lived experience of disability, carers and advocates raised concerns about:

- a need for more public messaging on protecting people who are at greater risk from COVID-19, and
- delays in the public release of data on COVID-19 outcomes for people with disability, including mortality data for this population.

Dr Lucas de Toca from the Department of Health and Aged Care provided an update on COVID-19 vaccination, including the:

- progress of the in-reach vaccination program for people with disability living in shared residential accommodation settings
- use of Moderna's bivalent COVID-19 vaccine in Australia, and
- the Therapeutic Goods Administration's provisional approval of Pfizer's bivalent COVID-19 vaccine.

Dr de Toca also gave a COVID-19 epidemiological update on the progress of the current wave and new variants circulating in the community. The number of COVID-19 variants circulating are making it more difficult to predict wave behaviour.

The department's Health Economics and Research Division presented on COVID-19 data for people with disability, including:

- the status of work to report on COVID-19 mortality among people with disability and the methodologies used for that reporting, and
- COVID-19 vaccination rates for NDIS participants and DSP recipients.

Community members of the Committee:

- again called for the department to publish COVID-19 mortality data for people with disability as soon as possible, and
- agreed to develop a statement on this matter.

The department also provided an update on current communications campaigns focused on preventing complacency and promoting COVID-19 safe behaviours. Members noted that current messaging centres on how people can protect themselves from COVID-19 and requested more messaging on how people can protect others. They also asked the department to consider:

- undertaking market research on the effectiveness of COVID-19 communications for people with disability, and
- providing more messaging for businesses on how they can operate safely, for example through ensuring their premises are adequately ventilated.

The Committee decided to start future meetings by noting the status of actions agreed to during its previous meetings.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The department will:

- consider:
  - undertaking market research on the effectiveness of COVID-19 communications for people with disability, and
  - providing more messaging to businesses on how they can operate safely and protect people who are at greater risk from COVID-19
- circulate a video on how disability providers can support people with disability to be vaccinated against COVID-19 for the Committee's feedback, and
- circulate a list of the Committee's communications working group to Committee members.

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for 21 February 2023.