



Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Health Advisory Group

Update: 22 March 2023

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its 1st meeting on 23 March 2023.

Updates from the meeting

The Department of Health and Aged Care (department) welcomed members to the first meeting since expanding the Advisory Group's remit to give advice on broader health and wellbeing matters for multicultural communities.

The department gave an update on the COVID-19 Vaccine Program. On 8 February 2023, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [updated advice on COVID-19 vaccine boosters](#).

The department presented a preliminary analysis of deaths associated with COVID-19 by vaccination status using the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP). This included analysis by outbreak waves. Further work is ongoing to refine the analysis in partnership with technical experts and critical stakeholders. The data show the protective nature of the vaccines.

The Advisory Group contributed to the design of several inclusive, multilingual digital and complementary non-digital services during the pandemic. In March 2023, the Vaccine Clinic Finder will become the Health Service Finder, to connect people to a broader range of health services. The Health Service Finder will be in English and 15 other languages. The Advisory Group discussed using the Easy Vaccine Access service model for other programs and services, such as cancer screening, for multicultural communities.

The department discussed the Healthcare Identifiers Project to improve the use and usability of Healthcare Identifiers across healthcare. Increasing the use and usability of Healthcare Identifiers will improve health system interoperability and data quality to support high-quality, sustainable care. [Submissions to the consultation](#) on changes to the Health Identifier Framework have closed and will inform a Bill for Parliament by mid-2024.

The department is focussing on supporting more people from multicultural backgrounds to participate in screening for cancer. The Commonwealth, with the state and territory governments, support free screening for breast (women 50 – 74 years), cervical (women and people with a cervix 25-74 years) and bowel cancer (50 – 74 years). The Advisory Group discussed co-designing with multicultural communities plans to encourage more people to get screened. The Advisory Group discussed the role bilingual and bicultural workers can play in supporting people to navigate the screening process.

Dr Vijay Roach, Chair of the [Migrant and Refugee Health Partnership](#) (the Partnership), presented on the Partnership's work. The Partnership is continuing to develop guidance and training to support health practitioners' cultural competency in working with patients from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Under the [Health Peak and Advisory Bodies Program](#), the Partnership is providing expert advice to the department and conducting engagement to support health outcomes for migrant and refugees. The Advisory Group discussed developing more guidance on working with children in healthcare setting and in using digital technologies.

The department discussed steps it is taking to improve the quality and accessibility of the department's COVID-19 vaccine information for people from multicultural backgrounds. This involves reviewing the processes and practices the department has established over the course of the pandemic to generate translated content. Through research with community members and stakeholders, the project will assess translated materials' effectiveness and relevance in meeting the needs of multicultural communities. Clear recommendations for improved practices will be the outcome of the project.

The Advisory Group will hold its next meeting on 29 June 2023.

See [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Health Advisory Group](#) and [terms of reference](#) for more information.