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**Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response  
to COVID-19 for People with Disability  
Meeting 3 October 2023 – Summary of Outcomes**

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The Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) noted that an update on actions arising from previous meetings was sent to the Committee.

Committee members with lived experience of disability:

- raised difficulties a provider has experienced accessing the [Disability Worker COVID-19 Leave Grant](#)
- noted the release of the Disability Royal Commission's Final Report, and
- requested information the Government's COVID-19 Response Inquiry and whether there would be opportunities to provide input to the inquiry. The Government released [terms of reference](#) for the inquiry on 21 September 2023.

The department's Office of Health Protection and Response provided a COVID-19 epidemiological update:

- COVID-19 case notifications have increased across most jurisdictions over recent weeks. However, cases remain much lower than the peak of the last wave in May 2023.
- COVID-19 associated intensive care unit admissions and deaths have decreased over recent months.

The Committee requested recent weekly data on COVID-19 associated deaths and asked whether this data is publicly available. A summary of recent weekly data on COVID-19 associated deaths will be circulated among meeting participants alongside links for data published on [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

Prof Katie Flanagan, infectious diseases physician and member of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), presented on ATAGI's [September update on the COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#). ATAGI has:

- recommended an additional 2023 COVID-19 vaccine dose for people aged 75 years and older if 6 months has passed since their last dose, and
- advised that the following groups should consider an additional 2023 COVID-19 vaccine dose:
  - adults aged 65-74, and
  - adults aged 18 to 64 years with severe immunocompromise.

ATAGI's latest advice reflects evidence demonstrating that the protective benefit of a recent dose increases with age. Prof Flanagan also emphasised that a 2023 booster provides good protection for most of the population, particularly when combined with the protection from previous COVID-19 infection.

The department's Centre of Disease Control (CDC) Establishment Branch presented on the proposed governance model for the Australian CDC. The proposed model includes opportunities for the inclusion of people with disability and the disability community at various levels of governance, noting final decisions are a matter for Government.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The department will:

- circulate a summary of weekly COVID-19 associated deaths between June and September 2023 and links to data on COVID-19 associated deaths published on [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au), and
- provide an update on the Government's COVID-19 Response Inquiry at the Committee's next meeting.

The Department of Social Services will:

- Follow up with the Committee member who raised issues about the Disability Worker COVID-19 Leave Grant.

The Committee's next meeting will be held in early December 2023.

The next meeting of the Disability and Health Sector Consultation Committee, on 4 December 2023, will focus on the health-related recommendations in the Disability Royal Commission's Final Report.