Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People with Disability – Extraordinary Meeting   
23 August 2021 – Summary of Outcomes

The Department of Health (the Department) held an extraordinary meeting of the Advisory Committee to provide updates on:

* vaccination rates among:
  + NDIS participants living in residential care settings
  + NDIS participants 16 years and over, and
  + disability workers who have undergone NDIS worker screening.

Participants discussed:

- options for collecting data on reasons for COVID-19 vaccine refusal, and

- work to produce communications tailored to specific cohorts.

The NDIA and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission reported on:

* risk management tools used to monitor and ensure continuity of support for NDIS participants during lockdown
* access to PPE, and
* communication materials for NDIS providers promoting vaccine uptake.

States and territories reported on:

* measures to vaccinate people with disability living in assisted boarding houses and supported residential services
* COVID-19 outbreaks linked to schools and disability services in NSW and the ACT, and
* lockdown measures in place.

The Advisory Committee discussed:

* vaccination rates among people with disability and disability support workers
* decision making about reopening communities
* priority access for people with disability in phases 1a and 1b of the vaccine rollout and   
  non-NDIS participants
* measures to prioritise vaccination appointments for the above groups
* uptake of Medicare flag-fall arrangements intended to encourage GP home visits for vaccination
* extending second dose appointments from three weeks to six weeks in Victoria, and
* processes and supports in place when substitute decision-maker refuses vaccine consent.

# NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

* put forward the Advisory Committee’s concerns for reopening plans, while vaccination rates for people with disability and disability support workers lag those for the general population
* work with Primary Health Networks to improve uptake of Medicare flag-fall arrangements supporting home visit appointments for COVID-19 vaccination, and
* develop messaging and support outreach targeting substitute decision makers who have withheld consent for vaccination.