



Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) 78th meeting, 11 December 2020

Agenda item	Purpose	Discussion and outcomes
1. Welcome and open 1.1. Declarations of interest 1.2. Actions arising from previous meetings 1.3. Out-of-session items including correspondence	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Noted.
2. ATAGI Annual Statement on Immunisation	Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ATAGI discussed progress on the annual immunisation statement and commented on draft content. The first statement will be published in early 2021.
3. Australian Immunisation Handbook	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ATAGI discussed the recent public consultation on changes to the Australian Immunisation Handbook chapter on rabies and other lyssaviruses. The revised chapter will be published in the Australian Immunisation Handbook.ATAGI discussed future updates to the Handbook chapters on tuberculosis and herpes zoster.
4. 2021 influenza vaccination program	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ATAGI noted the Department's plans for managing the anticipated high demand for seasonal influenza vaccines in 2021.

Endorse: a decision is to be made at this meeting
Discuss: a decision is to be made at a future meeting or out of session
Information: no decision points at this stage



5. Department Updates

5.1. Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee update

5.2. Immunisation and Communicable Diseases Branch update

5.3. Therapeutic Goods Administration / Advisory Committee on Vaccines update

Information

- ATAGI received an update from the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee](#) on recent decisions and upcoming considerations relating to vaccines.
- The Department informed ATAGI that it is progressing proposed amendments to the *Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015* that make it mandatory for all immunisation providers to report vaccinations to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), including for COVID-19 vaccines. The Department is continuing to work with software vendors and others to reduce technological barriers to AIR reporting.
- ATAGI was pleased to note that immunisation coverage remains high in Australia, indicating that COVID-19 has had little impact on routine vaccinations.
- ATAGI reviewed feedback and usage data on the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#), the [Handbook app](#) and the [National Immunisation Catch-up Calculator](#). ATAGI also noted plans for the next phase of upgrades to the Handbook website.
- ATAGI received an update from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) on regulatory issues relating to potential COVID-19 vaccines, including a pharmacovigilance plan.
- ATAGI discussed the outcomes and next steps for the recent vaccine safety investigation following the death of a person with pre-existing immunocompromising conditions after receiving Zostavax (live attenuated herpes zoster vaccine). ATAGI noted the TGA's [safety advisory on Zostavax use in people who are immunocompromised](#).
- ATAGI was concerned that Zostavax continues to be administered to people who are immunocompromised. ATAGI also noted a recent survey of GPs that found concerning [gaps in knowledge about zoster vaccination](#), including who is eligible for the vaccine and when the vaccine should not be given. ATAGI discussed potential strategies to improve communication about Zostavax and minimise the risk of inappropriate vaccination from both a regulatory and programmatic perspective.
- ATAGI encourages immunisation providers to check the recommendations for [use of zoster vaccine in people on immunosuppressive therapy](#) in the Handbook before



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		administering Zostavax. A Zostavax prevaccination screening form is also available on the Department's website.
6. National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance update	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATAGI noted an update from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance.
7. Communicable Diseases Network Australia update	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATAGI noted an update on vaccine-preventable disease epidemiology from 1 January to 30 September 2020. ATAGI noted the substantial decrease in notifications for many vaccine-preventable diseases, likely related to physical distancing and reduction in international travel due to COVID-19.
8. National Incident Room COVID-19 update	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATAGI noted an update from the National Incident Room about the latest COVID-19 epidemiology and analysis.
9. ATAGI COVID-19 Working Group update	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ATAGI COVID-19 Working Group was established to facilitate detailed examination of evidence and development of advice to the government on safe, effective and equitable use of COVID-19 vaccines in Australia. • ATAGI received updates from the 3 subgroups of this working group: the Vaccine Utilisation and Prioritisation Subgroup, the Vaccine Distribution and Program Implementation Subgroup, and the Vaccine Safety, Evaluation, Monitoring and Confidence Subgroup. • Membership and terms of reference for ATAGI's COVID-19 Working Group are available on the Department of Health website.
10. Report from Chair and members on ATAGI business	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATAGI received an update from the Department on the processes underway for confirming new ATAGI members, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative, and a new ATAGI Chair.
Meeting close		

Notes and resources

- ATAGI's membership, terms of reference and declaration of interest information are available on the [Department of Health website](#).
- The digital [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) is available on the Department's website.

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- A summary report of decisions of key immunisation technical advisory groups of interest will be available on the [NCIRS website](#).
- Information on NITAGs worldwide is available on the [NITAG Resource Centre website](#).
- Next ATAGI meeting: 18 February 2021, by videoconference.