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Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group

Update: 18 June 2021

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its sixth meeting on 18 June 2021. Members include leaders from culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse communities and their representative organisations, health experts and medical and public health practitioners. The Advisory Group meets monthly and publishes a communique following each meeting. It has three Working Groups: the Communication Working Group, the Vaccination Strategy Working Group and the Data Working Group.

The Advisory Group plays a main role in supporting the Australian Government in an evidence-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It builds on the department's long engagement with culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse stakeholders. The Advisory Group will give advice on the experience of multicultural people and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will recommend options to lessen the health impacts of COVID-19 on people and communities from multicultural backgrounds.

Updates from this meeting

The Department of Health (the department) provided an update on the Advisory Group's work plan and thanked members for their contributions. The Communications and Vaccine Strategy working groups continue to meet regularly. The Data Working Group held its first meeting on 17 June 2021. The department continues to hold roundtables and information sessions with stakeholders.

The Advisory Group and department welcomed the opening of the CALD COVID-19 Small Grant Fund on 21 June 2021. The Small Grant Fund will support multicultural community groups lead targeted grass-roots communications activities. Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia will administer the Fund.

The department provided an update on the Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Program. This included work to increase access to COVID-19 vaccinations through primary care and on-board general practices to administer the Pfizer vaccine.

The community pharmacy roll out in rural and regional Queensland has commenced. The department and jurisdictions are considering requests from more community pharmacies in Victoria, Western Australia and Northern Territory.

The department provided an update on the *ATAGI statement on revised recommendations on the use of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, 17 June 2021*. Members discussed the second dose for people aged fifty years and over who have already received a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The department gave an update on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout across residential aged care facilities for residents and workforce. On 4 June the Government announced requirements for residential, in home and community aged care providers to report on the status of workforce COVID-19 vaccination. Information on the workforce is de-identified.



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Members discussed access to information on vaccine coverage and diversity in residential aged care facilities.

The department continues to distribute communication content across multiple platforms. This includes information on the updated ATAGI advice, translated into 63 languages. Members raised the importance of making sure that these efforts meet the needs of people with disability and of planning for the intersection of disability and multicultural status. The department will update the Advisory Group with progress on the disability communications plan. Members agreed to include a standing item on COVID-19 vaccine rollout for people with disability in future Advisory Group agendas.

Members discussed how the term vaccine hesitancy can be misleading and how communications could be better targeted to address the varied underlying reasons for hesitancy. Members also raised the need for clearer messaging about eligibility to overcome confusion. They discussed how to disseminate the stakeholder kit and other resources to the broader health sector. The department will continue to consider how to do this.

The Advisory Group will meet again in July 2021.

See [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group](#) and [terms of reference](#) for more information.