

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group

Update: 16 February 2021

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its second meeting on 21 January 2021. The Advisory Group includes leaders from culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse communities and their representative organisations, health experts and medical and public health practitioners. It meets monthly and publishes a communique following each meeting. It has two Working Groups: the Communication Working Group and the Vaccination Strategy 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 gave an update on the COVID-19 situation and thanked members of both Working Groups for their valuable help. Their knowledge and advice helps ensure the COVID-19 Vaccination Program meets the needs of everyone in Australia.

The Advisory Group agreed to a work plan with three focus areas: communication, COVID-19 vaccination strategy and data. The department will continue to update the work plan as needed.

The Advisory Group agreed to the first version of the *COVID-19 Vaccination Program - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Implementation Plan (the Plan)*. The department will continue to update the Plan as needed. It will sit alongside state and territory plans and other plans for target populations, building on [Australia's COVID-19 Vaccine National Rollout Strategy](#).

The Plan explains how to make the vaccination program accessible to culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse communities. It recognises the need for a diverse health workforce, interpreter services and non-digital communication channels. Members suggested investigating operational considerations further before the roll out of the vaccination program. Future versions of the Plan will include this.

The Advisory Group highlighted many people in Australia need to take the COVID-19 vaccine for the plan to be successful. People should have access to the vaccine regardless of their visa status or Medicare eligibility. The department confirmed all visa holders in Australia will get free COVID-19 vaccination.

The Advisory Group celebrated collecting more data on country of birth and language spoken at home. This data collection comes under the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance Scheme and through General Practitioner led Respiratory Clinics (GPRCs). Members discussed the importance of collecting and using data in a sensitive, culturally appropriate way. They agreed collecting data will improve policy and service delivery.



Australian Government

BE COVIDSAFE

Members agreed to hold a roundtable to talk with community leaders and representatives about COVID-19 vaccination and communication plans.

The Advisory Group will meet again in February 2021.

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