# Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group

**Update: 9 December 2021**

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its twelfth meeting on 9 December 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 after 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 to provide an evidence-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It builds on the Department of Health’s long engagement with culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse stakeholders. The Advisory Group gives advice on the experience of multicultural people and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It recommends options to lessen the health impacts of COVID-19 on people and communities from multicultural backgrounds.

**Updates from this meeting**

The National COVID Vaccine Taskforce (the Taskforce) gave an update on the Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Program. On 26 November 2021, the [ATAGI released advice](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/11/atagi-advice-on-the-definition-of-fully-vaccinated.pdf) on who is considered fully vaccinated for the purposes of returning from overseas travel. On 5 December 2021, the [TGA provisionally approved](https://www.tga.gov.au/media-release/pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-comirnaty-provisionally-approved-use-individuals-5-years-and-over) the Pfizer vaccine for use in individuals aged 5 years and older. The Taskforce is preparing for the rollout for the 5-11 years age group. Members discussed practical issues around vaccinating this age group, getting children vaccinated before the new school year, and the impact for multicultural communities.

On 1 December 2021, the [Prime Minister released a statement](https://www.pm.gov.au/media/national-cabinet-statement-58) about Australia’s COVID-19 response to the Omicron strain. Australian authorities continue to monitor the situation around the world. On 3 December 2021, the [Australia Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) released advice](https://www.health.gov.au/news/atagi-statement-on-sars-cov-2-omicron-variant-and-covid-19-booster-doses) on booster doses and the Omicron variant. Vaccine providers may administer booster doses after a five-month interval, rather than six, under certain circumstances.

The Department gave an update on the [$180 million package](https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-greg-hunt-mp/media/minister-hunts-press-conference-in-melbourne-on-29-october-2021-on-new-funding-to-support-covid-19-cases-at-home-and-covid-19-vaccination-rollout) for primary care to support patients with COVID-19. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has [updated guidelines](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/other-health-issues/covid-19-home-care-guidelines) for GPs supporting patients at home. Members discussed ensuring that positive pathways are inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and vulnerable populations. Members discussed the need for translated and pictorial information and for cultural competency training for people working with COVID positive individuals.

The Department and the Taskforce provided an update on reporting of vaccine coverage among multicultural communities. The Taskforce is adding data on departures and arrivals since 2016 to improve accuracy. Members discussed the nuances of CALD communities in Australia and the way this data is captured in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

The Taskforce gave an update on the vaccine rollout for people with disability. Providers continue to administer primary and booster doses through in-reach. Members discussed the importance of Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to share information and collect data. Members discussed the work of community organisations to increase vaccination uptake with high risk groups.

The Department gave an update on the communication campaign. Planning has commenced on advertising for boosters and the 5-11 years children rollout. These resources will be translated. The Australian Government has done a mailout about boosters to every household in Australia. Members discussed the role of schools in sharing information about vaccines for children.

Migration Council Australia (MCA) gave an update on their community consultation and communication activities. Some recent work includes infographics on booster doses and in-language videos about pregnancy and the vaccine, vaccine safety, and reasons to get vaccinated.

The Taskforce thanked members for their time and work this past year. The Department of Health has extended the Advisory Group to 30 June 2022 so that it can continue to provide advice. The Advisory Group will meet again in January 2021.

See [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group](https://health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities-covid-19-health-advisory-group)and [terms of reference](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/terms-of-reference-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities-covid-19-health-advisory-group) for more information.