

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group

Update: 1 July 2022

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its 16th meeting on 29 April 2022 and its 17th meeting on 1 July 2022. 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 and Aged Care'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 the meeting: 29 April 2022

The Advisory Group held its 16th meeting on 29 April 2022, during the caretaker period. The Department of Health and Aged Care (the department) was operating under [caretaker conventions](#) so did not publish a Communique for this meeting.

Updates from the meeting: 1 July 2022

The National COVID Vaccine Taskforce (the Taskforce) gave an update on the Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Program. [On 25 March 2022, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\) recommended](#) an additional winter booster dose for groups at the highest risk of severe illness from COVID-19. [On 25 May 2022, ATAGI widened eligibility](#) for the additional winter booster dose to include other high-risk groups. [On 9 June 2022, ATAGI recommended](#) giving a first booster dose of the Comirnaty (Pfizer) COVID-19 vaccine to certain adolescents aged 12-15 years who are at an increased risk of severe disease. A table for vaccine providers showing the differences between each approved COVID-19 vaccine is [available on the department's website](#).

The Taskforce updated the Advisory Group on COVID-19 positive case data in the National Interoperable Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NINDSS). The two CALD fields, Country of Birth and Language Spoken at Home, were added to the NINDSS on 28 October 2020, following advice from Advisory Group members. The data quality of the two CALD fields varies by data field, jurisdiction and across time.

The department presented the latest analysis of COVID-19 vaccine coverage among CALD populations. This included new analysis of winter dose uptake for CALD cohorts aged 65 years or older, and uptake of third doses and other additional doses for CALD aged care

residents. The department is beginning to update the Multi Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) dataset with 2021 Census data.

The Advisory Group discussed digital and service design. The Taskforce is adding new accessibility features to the [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder](#). Vaccine clinics will be able to list whether they have staff that speak a language other than English and whether the clinic has a low sensory space available. The Taskforce is translating information about the Easy Vaccine Access (EVA) service.

The Advisory Group discussed the COVID-19 vaccine communications campaign. The department thanked members for providing feedback on materials for the [‘Take on winter’](#) and [‘Kids will be kids’](#) campaigns. The department has now launched these campaigns and is tailoring them for multicultural communities. The department has created a simplified infographic about vaccines for consumers. Members discussed motivators for vaccination, such as minimising risk of long COVID.

The Taskforce gave an update on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout to people with disability. The focus continues to be on in-reach for winter doses. An expression of interest is open for residential Disability Service Providers who need Commonwealth vaccination in-reach support. The National Disability Insurance Agency has introduced a [workforce relief register](#) to help fill gaps in disability support staffing over winter.

Migration Council Australia (MCA), part of The Social Policy Group, presented on its recent COVID-19 vaccine communication and community consultation activities. MCA has developed multilingual communications materials on COVID-19 vaccines and rapid antigen testing. MCA has also consulted with service providers on barriers some women and children from migrant and refugee communities experience in accessing COVID-19 vaccines.

The Taskforce thanked members for their time. The Advisory Group will hold its next meeting on 21 July 2022.

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