

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group

Update: 25 March 2022

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group (Advisory Group) held its fifteenth meeting on 25 March 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'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 25 March 2022, the [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\) recommended](#) an extra booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine for selected groups before winter. These are people at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19. The Taskforce confirmed that since late 2021 ATAGI has advised people can get a COVID-19 vaccine and influenza vaccine on the same day.

On 2 March 2022, ATAGI gave advice on Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) and Nuvaxovid (Novavax) as boosters. Individuals can have AstraZeneca as a booster where they cannot have an mRNA vaccine for medical reasons. They can have Novavax if no other vaccine is suitable. Members discussed reasons why uptake of boosters, while continuing to increase, has slowed down.

The Taskforce gave an update on the COVID-19 vaccine disability rollout. The Disability Residential Accommodation in-reach program for booster doses is nearly complete. The Taskforce is preparing for the rollout of winter doses to the disability sector.

The department discussed the COVID-19 vaccine communications campaign. The department is working with states and territories on coordinated messaging. Messaging is focused on COVID-19 vaccines for children and COVID-19 boosters. The department thanked the CALD Communications Working Group for their feedback on a [new video advertisement](#). Members discussed ways to make it easier to find COVID-19 resources online.

The Taskforce presented the latest analysis of COVID-19 vaccine coverage among CALD populations. The Taskforce has done work to better understand vaccination rates among the

5-11 year cohort. Members noted that vaccination rates among CALD communities are high overall. Members discussed reasons for vaccination rates among different demographics.

The Taskforce thanked the Advisory Group for giving feedback on the Easy Vaccine Access (EVA) project. This project launched on 28 March 2022 as an extension of the National Coronavirus Helpline (NCH). A person can now text "Hey EVA" to 0481 611 382 to get help booking a COVID-19 vaccine appointment. EVA will arrange for an NCH call agent to call the person in their preferred language at their preferred time.

The Living with COVID-19 Taskforce gave an update on the [Get COVID Clarity](#) campaign. In response to feedback from the Advisory Group, communications about the NCH will be in 16 languages and in audio and video formats.

The department gave an update on rapid antigen testing. The Advisory Group discussed uptake of free rapid antigen tests by concession card holders.

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) gave an update on its community consultation and communications activities. MYAN is running a campaign called "#What'sYourWhy" to promote positive outcomes of COVID-19 vaccination. MYAN and its Youth Reference Group are co-designing materials addressing myths about COVID-19 vaccines. MYAN is working with partners to hold consultations with young people across Australia.

The Taskforce thanked members for their time. The Advisory Group will meet again on 22 April 2022.

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