



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

**Minister for Indigenous Australians
Member for Hasluck**

MEDIA RELEASE

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PHASE 1B COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT IS UNDERWAY: INDIGENOUS PEOPLE 55 AND OVER, ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES

As of this week around 87,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 55 or older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in phase 1B of the national rollout strategy.

Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP today made time to attend Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Service to receive his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

“We have done a remarkable job so far in the fight against the COVID-19 virus, we cannot now become complacent,” Minister Wyatt said. “Vaccines are an important tool in our strategy and I urge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to come forward and get vaccinated when they are able to. It will help protect themselves, their family and their community.”

There are 32 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services around the country who will begin providing COVID-19 vaccinations this week. The number of participating services and delivery sites will increase each week; building to around 100 services for around 300 sites in remote, rural and urban communities. People can also get their vaccination from general practices, commonwealth vaccination clinics (previously known as GP-led respiratory clinics). Pharmacies will begin vaccinations later in the rollout.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation advised the Australian Government to prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccination in Australia based on evidence on who would be most affected if they contracted COVID-19.

“Our people have a higher risk of getting and developing serious outcomes from communicable diseases due to a number of factors including having a high rate of underlying chronic health conditions and in some cases crowded-living conditions, which increases the risk of transmission,” Minister Wyatt said.

“It’s normal to have questions or concerns, and possibly feel hesitant about getting a vaccine. I encourage all of you to listen to your local community controlled health organisation as a trusted source” he added.

The Department of Health also provides evidence-based information about COVID-19 vaccines on [health.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines-is-it-true](https://www.health.gov.au/covid-19-vaccines-is-it-true).

One of the reasons Australia has been so successful in preventing COVID-19 in reaching remote and Indigenous communities and causing serious illness, like it has overseas, is the quick response and hard work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities, leaders and health services.

Every Australian will have the opportunity to be vaccinated over the coming months and we thank every Australian for their patience. There are more than six million Australians in phase 1B, and not everyone will be able to be vaccinated immediately. No-one will miss out, whether they live in a city or country town or a very remote area.

To see if you are eligible and find your local service to make an appointment, you can use the eligibility checker at covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility or you can also contact your health service or general practitioner directly.

The Australian Government continues working in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector and state and territory governments in all aspects of the National Response to COVID-19, including in the roll-out of the vaccine program to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia.

For more: <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/information-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-about-covid-19-vaccines>

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