

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



Monday, 4 October 2021

MORE REASONS TO SMILE AS VACCINATION VANS HIT THE ROAD

Some of Victoria's 'Smile Squad' dental vans will be used to support targeted vaccination efforts, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), community leaders and mainstream health services.

The first of three dedicated COVID-19 Vaccine Vans will hit the road this week, travelling to the City of Greater Shepparton, with another van travelling to the City of Latrobe later in the week.

The mobile vaccination units will be staffed and run by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and mainstream partners to remove transport and geographic barriers to access among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

Over the last several weeks, vaccination in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been increasing week on week as further clinics continue to open.

While uptake among the community is high compared to other Australian jurisdictions, it is still lower than the broader Victorian population.

Currently, more than 65 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians have received one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

From 1 October 2021, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to walk in without an appointment to any state-run vaccination centre across Victoria to be vaccinated.

Increased vaccine supply has been provided to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across Victoria to respond to increased demand.

Additional surge workforce support continues to be provided in Mildura, Gippsland, Shepparton and key areas in metropolitan Melbourne.

Increased local community campaigns and information is being provided across Aboriginal communities including letterbox drops, online community conversations, and information sessions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at higher risk from COVID-19 due to a number of factors, including pre-existing medical conditions and large households.

The first destination of the ACCO Vaccine Vans, the City of Greater Shepparton, has the largest Aboriginal population in Victoria outside Melbourne.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine program call the Victorian Aboriginal COVID Infoline on 1800 312 911 or visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities-and-covid-19-vaccines.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations across Victoria have led the way in keeping community safe, informed and healthy with astounding results."

"These vans will boost community-led efforts to ensure that all members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community have access to the COVID-19 vaccine."

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"The Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) Vaccine Van will head to Shepparton this week, supporting Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative's incredible work with the community."

Book online at coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine or call 1800 675 398 to secure your COVID-19 vaccine appointment