

# Media Release

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



Monday, 25 October 2021

## **ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICES IN RACE TO BOOST VACCINATIONS**

The Victorian Government – in partnership with Aboriginal community controlled organisations – is redoubling efforts to close the gap between Indigenous and non- Indigenous vaccination rates.

As Victoria races towards its next roadmap target, mobile outreach vans, culturally sensitive pop-ups and surge workforce teams are being deployed across Victoria offering more opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to get vaccinated.

The community-led response recognises that while uptake among the community is high compared to other Australian jurisdictions, it remains lower than the broader Victorian population.

Close to 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians aged 12 and over have had one vaccine dose, compared to 90 per cent of the wider population. When it comes to second doses, 58 per cent of eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are fully vaccinated, compared to 71 per cent of the state's total population.

Following a successful outreach program in Mildura last week, mobile vaccination vans operated by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) are being deployed to Morwell this week. The vaccination vans will then be deployed to Seymour, Warrnambool, the Mornington Peninsula and the Grampians.

In addition, a newly commissioned vaccination van coordinated by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) will begin servicing metropolitan Melbourne from this week.

Bespoke and culturally sensitive pop-ups for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians are also ramping up, with clinics being hosted at local Gathering Places as well as sport and youth-focused organisations.

Dedicated and culturally safe spaces have been established at a number of vaccination sites, including the former Ford Factory in Geelong through a partnership between Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative and Barwon Health.

Additional surge workforce, supported by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Star Health, is providing supplementary support to Mildura, Gippsland, Shepparton and key areas in metropolitan Melbourne with large Indigenous populations.

A targeted SMS and social media campaign are reminding and encouraging community members to get vaccinated. Victorians can visit any of our state run vaccination centre to get vaccinated, without booking an appointment.

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](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities-and-covid-19-vaccines).

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley**

*“Our mobile vaccination vans and pop-up clinics are removing barriers that may stop someone getting vaccinated.”*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams**

*“Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations are continuing to lead the way in keeping community safe.”*

For more information visit [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au)