Tuesday, 22 February 2022

MILLIONS PROTECTED IN FIRST YEAR OF VICTORIAN VACCINATIONS

An average of eleven vaccines a minute have been administered by Victoria's state-run services since the COVID-19 vaccination program commenced 12 months ago today.

Victoria's health services can be proud of their efforts, with our health professionals delivering almost six million doses – more than any other state or territory – across 166 vaccine hubs and 1,322 pop-ups and mobile sites.

Professor Rhonda Stuart, the first person to diagnose a COVID-19 case in Australia, was the first Victorian to receive the COVID-19 vaccine on 22 February 2021. Initially commissioned to deliver a third of the program, Victoria's vaccine centres have since delivered 42 per cent of the 14,105,757 doses administered statewide.

Victoria is also proud of its support of general practitioners and community pharmacies, which have delivered around eight million doses – backed by more than $5.7 million in grants from the Andrews Labor Government.

More than 5.7 million first doses, 5.3 million second doses and 2.9 million third doses have been delivered state-wide, and 56 LGAs have second-dose vaccination rates higher than 95 per cent among people aged 16 and over.

The state's program carefully considers the needs of vulnerable groups, including culturally and linguistically diverse people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, refugees, new migrants and pregnant women. The Department of Health has held 1,131 community sessions with vulnerable groups, with 50,000 people attending.

Victoria has also worked with 72 vaccine champions and 235 ambassador organisations and developed an in-home vaccination service and Australia's first disability liaison team to ensure vaccine access for all. More than 88 per cent of NDIS participants aged 16 and over are double vaccinated – higher than any Australian state.

Yarning sessions, outreach programs at gathering places and mobile vaccination vans run by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations have helped increase confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Currently, more than 86 per cent of First Nations Victorians have now had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine – higher than any Australian state.

The vaccine program now continues into its second year. The number of Victorian adults who have had a third dose has almost doubled in the past month, rising from 29 per cent on 22 January to 55.9 per cent on 22 February. More than 80 per cent of Victorians over the age of 70 have had three doses – but there's still more work to do.

To get your third dose, book at a GP or pharmacy at www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-vaccine-clinic-finder or book (or walk-in) at a vaccination centre at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Martin Foley

"We're proud to have supported the Commonwealth's COVID-19 vaccine program by delivering more vaccines than any other state or territory and focusing on the Victorians who needed additional access and support."

"A huge thanks goes out to our hard-working doctors, nurses, pharmacists and community health services who have worked tirelessly to administer almost 14 million COVID-19 vaccines."