

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000014

The decision not to use Moderna vaccine

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Why doesn't Australia have a vaccine agreement with Moderna, a vaccine that has 94% efficacy?

Answer:

The Department of Health is in active discussions with several vaccine manufactures. The details of these discussions are commercial in confidence.

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Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000026

Vaccine nationalisation

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

What is Australia doing to prevent vaccine nationalisation and ensure our neighbours in the pacific region have timely and adequate access to a covid-19 vaccine?

Answer:

- Australia's three COVID-19 vaccine Advance Purchase Agreements (for the Pfizer / BioNTech, AstraZeneca / University of Oxford, and Novavax vaccines) allow us to support our Pacific and South East Asian neighbours. These vaccine doses can be donated to other countries or international organisations should they prove safe and effective, and units are available above domestic needs.
- Government support for the COVAX Facility is another mechanism to provide vaccine coverage for our region and beyond. The COVAX Facility is co-hosted by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the World Health Organization and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations. It aims to pool purchasing power and risk to develop a diverse portfolio of potential COVID-19 vaccines and fast track manufacture.
 - On the 26 August 2020, Australia announced an investment of \$80 million to the Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) of the COVAX Facility and on 22 September 2020 Australia joined the COVAX Facility with an upfront payment of \$123 million. Australia's contribution to the AMC will support rapid, fair and equitable access to vaccines for 92 eligible lower and lower-middle countries including most Pacific island countries.
- Further enhancing Australia's support for the Pacific, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on 31 October 2020 announced the creation of a regional vaccine access and health security initiative that will consist of a range of support mechanisms including supplying safe and effective vaccine doses and delivering technical support to our regional partners. The Government has allocated \$523.2 million to this initiative. The funding will help ensure that the countries of the Pacific and Timor-Leste are able to achieve full immunisation coverage, and will make a significant contribution toward meeting the needs of Southeast Asia.

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Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000027

US re-joining the COVAX facility

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

How will the United States re-joining the COVAX facility impact Australia's involvement in the scheme?

Answer:

- The Australian Government was pleased by President Biden's 21 January 2021 announcement that the United States will support the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and join the COVAX Facility (the United States is not re-joining the COVAX Facility, they are joining for the first time).
- The United States joining does not impact Australia's commitment to the COVAX Facility except insofar as it highlights the importance of continuing to support this global initiative and expands the COVAX Facility's capabilities.
 - We will engage with our United States counterparts on how best to ensure that the COVAX Facility meets its goal of global COVID-19 vaccine coverage.
 - The United States has the potential to bring substantial resources to the COVAX Facility and has strong expertise in various technical fields relevant to global rollout of vaccines. Their membership will help ensure COVAX is a success.
- We are also pleased by President Biden's directive to the US Secretary of State and Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a framework for donating surplus vaccines (following sufficient supply in the United States) to countries in need, including through the COVAX Facility.
- The United States will bring the COVAX Facility to 191 member economies including more than 90 per cent of the world's population. This reflects global recognition that no country can truly emerge from this pandemic until all countries have access to safe, effective and affordable COVID-19 vaccines.

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Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000030

Expected deliveries of the Pfizer vaccine before 4 April

Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

How many deliveries of the Pfizer vaccine does the Government expect to have received before 4th April?

- a. At what rate will the number of weekly deliveries of the Pfizer vaccine need to increase from the initial 80,000 for this to be possible?

Answer:

Pfizer deliveries are scheduled to commence in mid-February. Final delivery schedules, including volumes are being worked through with Pfizer and jurisdictions.

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Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000031

Expected doses of the Pfizer vaccine distributed to each state before 4 April

Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

How many doses of the Pfizer vaccine do you expect to be distributed to each state before 4th April

Answer:

The final delivery schedule for Pfizer, including volumes is being worked through with Pfizer and jurisdictions. Doses will be allocated based on the proportion of phase 1 priority populations in each jurisdiction.