

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: National Indigenous Australians Agency

Topic: COVID-19 Vaccination rate in Western Australia

Senator: Cox

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Question:

Senator COX: One of the questions I had was regarding the time line. Has there been a particular time line in order to reach the 80 per cent vaccine rate in WA?

Lt Gen. Frewen: We're working to provide every opportunity for all Australians, but particularly for Indigenous Australians, to get vaccinated as quickly as possible. We don't have specific time lines, but we're working to get the rates up as fast as we can.

Mr Exell: I'll be quick. I'm happy to take it on notice, but we actually have a detailed list of activities ranging over the period of activities, very specific counts. So I'm happy to pull that together and submit it to the committee afterwards. I won't go through those, but I just thought it was worth adding. We actually have a pretty comprehensive plan of activities—

CHAIR: That would be really useful.

Answer:

In support of the Department of Health's efforts to boost Indigenous vaccinations, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) continues to utilise its nation-wide reach to assist the mobilisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector and other local networks to help overcome barriers to vaccine uptake.

As Lt Gen. Frewen indicated there is no specific timeline to reach the 80 per cent vaccine rate in Western Australia or elsewhere, in part because every community is unique. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Attached is a list of activities NIAA's Regional Presence is undertaking to support Department of Health efforts to increase vaccination rates:

Queensland

- In Townsville, NIAA contributed \$40,000 under a Local Investment Fund to support free entry for vaccinated attendees of the All Blacks Carnival on 8-10 October 2021.
- In Brisbane, NIAA worked with the Department of Health and Medical Rescue (Vaccine AS) to support the delivery of the Jimbooba Vaccination Hub that ran over three days from 13-15 October 2021.
- In Cairns, NIAA linked up with the Wuchopperen Health Service to support their vaccination drives, held 20, 28 August and 18 September 2021.

New South Wales

- In Dubbo, NIAA established the COVID-19 Central West Koori Community Circle, which gathers to share information and resources, problem solve and provide solutions for organisations and community with regard to COVID-19 and vaccination acceleration in Western and Far Western New South Wales.
- In Wallaga Lake, NIAA has supported the Katungul Vaccine Clinic by circulating information about the clinics across its network of providers and community organisations.

Western Australia

- In Geraldton, NIAA worked with the Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation and Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service to organise a COVID clinic at the town's NAIDOC event on 30 September 2021.
- In Carnarvon, NIAA staff attended the Yamatji on Country event in Carnarvon on 14 October 2021 to call on the help of attendees to enlist their communities to get vaccinated. The event was organised by Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation and was attended by over 100 Yamatji people from the Mid-West Gascoyne region.
- In Fitzroy Crossing, NIAA staff members supported the Jabathon that occurred 12-14 October 2021 at the Tarunda Shopping Centre.
- In Derby, NIAA Staff provided logistical support at the Derby Vaxathon on 7 October 2021 – including by screening attendees before they got their jab.
- In the Kimberley, NIAA is providing up to \$150,000 Local Investment funding to the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service and Wunan Health to support their efforts to boost vaccinations.

Northern Territory

- In Palumpa in the Northern Territory, NIAA engaged with NT Chief Minister's Office, NT Health and local providers to support vaccination rollout in the community on 28-29 September 2021. NIAA's Government Engagement Coordinator and IEO engagement staff assisted with communication and transport in community as part of the rollout, alongside West Daly Regional Council Night Patrol.
- In West Arnhem, NIAA's Local Investment fund supported the hire of 4WD buses to transport Maningrida Homelands residents to and from Maningrida community during vaccination visits by NT Health, helping Maningrida achieve vaccination rates over 70 per cent.
- NIAA's Government Engagement Coordinator in Maningrida spoke at a women's BBQ event, facilitated by Njamareya Cultural Leaders and Justice Group, about the importance of getting vaccinated.

- NIAA's Government Engagement Coordinator and Indigenous Engagement Officer in Yuendumu engaged with various stakeholders, including community leaders, to disseminate vaccine messaging, coordinate local activities to support increased vaccination rates.

South Australia

- NIAA staff engaged with a number of Aboriginal community health services, including Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service, to identify vaccination workforce challenges and connect requests for surge support with Department of Health resourcing initiatives.
- In Adelaide, NIAA staff with SA Health's Deputy Chief Executive and other senior officials from SA Health on 24 September 2021 to explore further opportunities for NIAA to support vaccine acceleration for Indigenous South Australians.

Victoria/Tasmania

- In both Victoria and Tasmania, NIAA staff shared communication resources amongst Indigenous community networks to promote effective vaccine messaging.
- NIAA staff promoted an online *Train the Trainer* session for Aboriginal Service sector staff, aimed at developing confidence in dealing with vaccine hesitancy and building evidence-based support for COVID-19 vaccines.
- In Victoria, NIAA distributed resources and information about the Victorian Government's Vaccination Enhancement grants and *Ask Izzy* support directory to Regional Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
- In Southern Tasmania, NIAA staff supported delivery of additional COVID vaccination clinics and information sessions in conjunction with Karadi Aboriginal Corporation, Primary Health Tasmania and the Tasmanian Department of Health
- In Tasmania, NIAA provided local intelligence on how COVID is impacting the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to the Southern Tasmanian COVID Regional Recovery Committee; and provided regular updates to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Reference Group, comprised of a number of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.