



### **Dear colleagues**

Following consultation between the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), tonight the Australian Government announced changes to the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

The Prime Minister declared four recommendations from ATAGI that come into effect immediately:

1. At the current time, use of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is preferred over AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in adults under 50 years of age who have not already received a first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine. This is based on the increased risk of complications from COVID-19 with increasing age (and thus increased benefit of vaccination), and the potentially lower, but not zero, risk of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome with increasing age.
2. Immunisation providers should only give a first dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to adults under 50 years of age where the benefit clearly outweighs the risk for that individual's circumstances.
3. People who have had their first dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine without any serious adverse effects can be given their second dose. This includes adults under 50 years of age. People who have had blood clots associated with low platelet levels after their first dose of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine should not be given their second dose.
4. The Federal Department of Health will further develop and refine resources for informed consent that clearly convey the benefits and risks of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine for both immunisation providers and consumers of all ages.

The Queensland Health Vaccination Command Centre will work with all stakeholders to manage this significant change. The full [ATAGI statement is here](#).

If you have a vaccination scheduled in the coming days and are in a group subject to the recommendations above, please either cancel your booking, or, if you would still like the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, discuss it with your vaccine provider when you attend the appointment. We will have extra measures in place in our vaccination clinics to make people aware of this advice.

The safety of Queenslanders, including you – our incredibly hard-working and committed staff members – is our number one priority. Having a COVID-19 vaccine is an important step to reduce the serious effects of COVID-19 in people who become infected with the virus. The evidence shows that people who are vaccinated have a much lower chance of developing more serious disease from COVID-19.

If you have immediate questions about getting vaccinated, you should discuss them with your GP or your treating clinician. As we receive more information from the Commonwealth and understand how it will impact the vaccine rollout, we will inform you.

Together we have worked incredibly hard to protect Queensland throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Queenslanders have trusted us to keep them safe and that is what we will continue to do.

### **Kind regards**

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