

Media release

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Another million doses in 17 days at state and territory clinics as pharmacy drives evolving vaccine strategy

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the latest COVID-19 vaccine milestone as hospital pharmacists and their clinician peers ensure the agility of Australia's roll-out through large-scale clinics in high-density population centres, with community pharmacy crucial in rural and remote areas.

Australia's state and territory run vaccine clinics have again administered one million COVID-19 vaccine doses in the past 17 days, bringing their total to just over four million doses – a consistently significant proportion of the more than nine million doses administered across all federal and jurisdictional vaccination sites since the nationwide vaccine rollout commenced in February.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says that as New South Wales continues to battle its COVID-19 outbreak which began in mid-June, and with bordering states and territories remaining vigilant to limit the spread of the highly transmissible Delta strain, SHPA supports the continued escalation of Australia's vaccine rollout strategy.

'We welcome the announcement that Australia's next supply of the Pfizer vaccine will arrive a month earlier than initially scheduled, and welcome next Monday's commencement of operations at the New South Wales Government's second COVID-19 mass vaccination hub in Newcastle. Transferred from John Hunter Hospital's COVID-19 vaccine clinic, the new hub is anticipated to have the capacity to administer up to 20,000 vaccinations a week.'

Ms Michaels says that as Australia's COVID-19 vaccine rollout continues to adapt to evolving advice and demand, hospital pharmacists and technicians continue to play a crucial role in the largest public health initiative in Australia's history.

'Hospital pharmacists continue to lead the set-up and operation of these mass vaccination hubs while not only acting as stewards for Australia's multiple vaccine candidates, but in many cases also taking charge of preparing and administering vaccines, to make sure vaccination demand is met.

'Hospital pharmacists, along with their clinician peers, have ensured the agility of Australia's COVID-19 vaccine program, showcasing their excellence in medicines management while remaining responsive and flexible to changing vaccine advice.

'SHPA applauds community pharmacy's increasing involvement in supporting the rollout across rural and remote areas, with 65 community pharmacies now offering the AstraZeneca vaccine in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and a further 135 community pharmacies set to join the effort across New South Wales', Victorian and South Australian regions from next Monday.

'We continue to proudly support our members and their peers in the expansion of accessibility to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available to Australians as soon as possible, wherever they reside.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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