



The ACT is prepared for the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination program

Australia's vaccination program is due to commence in late February 2021, subject to vaccine availability.

The ACT Government is working in partnership with the Australian Government to deliver a safe, effective and targeted COVID-19 vaccination program here in the ACT.

The ACT vaccination program will be delivered in a phased approach in line with the national rollout.

The ACT Government is reaching out to those eligible for vaccination in the first phase to let them know when and how they will be able to receive the vaccine in Canberra.

The first vials of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine are due to arrive in the Territory at the end of February, and quarantine, border and frontline health care workers will be contacted in the coming weeks to book vaccination appointments as the vaccine becomes available.

Other priority groups will follow, with vaccination of the remainder of the Canberra community expected to begin mid-year.

COVID-19 vaccination will be free for all adults in Canberra who want to be vaccinated.

The ACT Government will keep the community informed throughout the program's rollout so that Canberrans will know when they will become eligible to be vaccinated.

It is anticipated that all adults who want to be vaccinated will receive the vaccine in 2021. However, this is subject to approval, regulation, and sufficient supply of vaccines.

More information is on the COVID-19 website at www.covid19.act.gov.au/vaccine

COVID-19 vaccination program



How the vaccine will be rolled out

The first vaccine to be administered in the ACT will be Pfizer BioNTech.

While the exact start date will be subject to vaccine availability, the ACT is well-advanced in its preparations to roll out vaccine delivery from late February 2021.

The ACT Government is currently finalising all aspects of the rollout, including:

- vaccine delivery, storage and warehousing
- creating ICT systems
- workforce recruitment and training
- stakeholder communications; and
- identifying and preparing to contact people who meet the eligibility requirements within the priority groups.

In the ACT, approximately 1,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be administered per week. This will increase as vaccine supply increases and as more vaccines are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA).

Phase 1a rollout

Australia's COVID-19 vaccines will be available in phases. Priority groups have been identified using public health, medical and epidemiological evidence.

Canberrans who need it most will be first in line to be vaccinated. Initially, this includes people with a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms, as well as those who – because of the work they do or for other reasons – are at greater risk of exposure, infection or of transmitting the virus.

From 22 February (supply dependent) the ACT Government will start vaccinating people eligible under Phase 1a of the rollout. This includes:

- Quarantine workers, including Border Force, airline staff, defence, police, transport and hotel staff
- COVID-19 testing staff, including GP respiratory assessment clinics and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
- Pathology staff working directly with COVID-19
- Emergency Department staff – Canberra Health Services, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, Yass District Hospital and Queanbeyan District Hospital
- ICU and Critical Care staff – Canberra Health Services, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, National Capital Private Hospital, Calvary John James Hospital
- Relevant ACTAS staff
- Staff working in designated COVID-19 wards at Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.

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The Commonwealth Government will be delivering a parallel program for staff and residents in disability and aged residential care in the ACT. Questions regarding this program should be directed to the Commonwealth Government.

The ACT Government will vaccinate about 4,000 people during Phase 1a. This will include about 3,500 health care workers.

People eligible under Phase 1a will receive an email letting them know how to book their vaccination appointment. People will be contacted in a staged approach over the coming weeks as vaccines are delivered.

Vaccinations in Phase 1a will be administered by trained Canberra Health Services nursing staff.

Surrounding regions

Canberra Health Services will administer vaccinations to Emergency Department staff at Yass District Hospital and Queanbeyan District Hospital.

As the program rolls out, the ACT Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government and provide support to New South Wales (NSW) where appropriate.

Vaccination Hub, sites, and workforce

From 22 February 2021, the **COVID-19 Surge Centre** in Garran will be operational as both a testing facility and a location that will administer the vaccine.

The COVID-19 Surge Centre was custom-designed for the COVID-19 environment and constructed to the highest standards of infection prevention and control. Its structure means it can continue to operate as a testing site, with safe separation between the testing and vaccination services. There will be separate entrances, with clear signage to direct people to the correct service. Adjacent to Canberra Hospital, it will initially be the only vaccination site in the ACT.

As more COVID-19 vaccines are approved for use in Australia and delivered and rolled out to the community, other vaccine sites will become available, including at some General Practices (GPs), GP respiratory clinics, Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Services, and ACT Government-run vaccination clinics.

The Australian Government is currently undertaking an Expression of Interest process for GPs and pharmacies to administer the vaccine. For update on this work, please contact the Australian Government.

Vaccination workforce

The ACT Government is recruiting staff and providing training to administer the vaccine.

Nurse immunisers, registered nurses, midwives and GPs will be authorised to administer the vaccinations. This might be expanded to community pharmacists across the country later in the program.

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Vaccine storage and security

The ACT Government and all other state and territories are working with Australian Government agencies to finalise transportation, storage and distribution plans. This will ensure vaccines and other equipment can be moved and stored securely and safely.

There will be an increased security presence at the Canberra Hospital campus. Security systems and processes will be enhanced to ensure the safety of staff, the community and facilities during the rollout of the COVID-19 program. As the program develops, more sites across the ACT may be used for vaccinations. The ACT Government will work with the Commonwealth and all relevant groups to ensure sites are secured and safe.

The location of vaccine storage sites will not be released to the public due to security considerations.

Vaccinating the community

In line with the Commonwealth Government's COVID-19 strategy, the COVID-19 vaccine will be made available to the community in a phased rollout. It will be free and voluntary to get vaccinated.

People in the Phase 1a population group (quarantine and border workers, frontline health care worker sub-groups, and aged care and disability care staff and residents) will be the first to receive the vaccine.

For the remaining population, the ACT Government will make sure people know when they can get the vaccine, including where to get it and what to do when the time comes.

How will the community know when it's their turn to be vaccinated?

The ACT Government will be running a public information campaign throughout the vaccine program to ensure the community is up to date with the progress of the rollout so they will know when it is their turn to get vaccinated.

Anticipated timeframes

Phase	Commencement	Priority population group
Phase 1a	Late February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">quarantine and border workershealth care workers working in high-risk exposure and transmission areas, like COVID-19 testing clinics, respiratory clinics and some emergency department staffresidents and staff of aged and disability residential care facilities
Phase 1b	March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">adults aged 70 and overother health care workersAboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 55 yearsadults with an underlying medical condition, including those with a disability, who did not receive a vaccine under phase 1acritical and high-risk workers including defence, police, fire, emergency services and meat processing
Phase 2a	May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">adults aged 50-69 yearsAboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18-54other critical and high-risk workers

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Phase 2b	July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• remaining adult population• catch up for any unvaccinated Australians from previous phases
Phase 3	September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• people 16 years and younger (if recommended)*

Commonwealth and ACT program responsibilities

Both the Australian Government and local governments have responsibilities in delivering the COVID-19 Vaccination Program across the country.

The Australian Government is responsible for the approvals, procurement, and delivery of vaccines, as well as vaccine regulation, acceptance from manufacturers and transport. They are setting priority groups for vaccine eligibility and data collection, and reporting requirements.

Here in the ACT, the Australian Government will also manage all aspects of the program for staff and residents of aged residential care, staff and residents of disability residential care, and all vaccinations administered in general practice (including respiratory and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health clinics) and (at a later date) community pharmacy settings.

The ACT Government is responsible for establishing and running ACT Government vaccination clinics, ensuring an appropriately qualified and trained workforce to administer vaccines provided at these clinics, compliance with safety including clinical governance, and local communications.