

Media Release

Public Health Association of Australia



Public Health Association
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No-fault vaccine injury compensation scheme is a welcome boost to Australian COVID vaccine program

Today during the National Immunisation Conference held by the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), Professor Paul Kelly, Australia's Chief Medical Officer, confirmed the introduction of a no-fault Vaccine Injury Compensation Scheme (VICS) for COVID-19 vaccines administered in Australia, a move that is strongly welcome to assist in Australia's COVID vaccine roll out and boost public trust in the program.

A no-fault vaccine injury compensation scheme compensates individuals who have a vaccine injury following the correct administration of a registered vaccine. It is considered a vital component of a strong immunisation program by public health experts.

PHAA CEO Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin commented, 'This is a very welcome announcement. It is well established that the majority of Australians are reasonable and supportive of COVID vaccination. For those with concerns, the scheme will demonstrate that Australia takes seriously its obligation to individuals who get vaccinated for the good of the community, their patients and themselves.

'It is an important and evidence-based method to enhance public trust in our national COVID-19 vaccine program.

'While we know that instances of serious adverse events following COVID vaccines are extraordinarily rare, this doesn't minimise the negative effects suffered by the very few unlucky individuals who do get them.

'A no-fault vaccine injury compensation scheme will be one important way to ensure that those very few Australians who do unfortunately experience an adverse event which requires further health or medical attention can be given the extra support they need.

'It's positive that the scheme will retrospectively address the existing cases of serious adverse events from COVID vaccines in Australia, as I'm sure all Australians would like to see support given to those individuals and families who are in need.

'The scheme will also provide extra confidence to the public in the vaccine program in light of the announcement this week that access to the AstraZeneca vaccine will now be provided to those aged under 40 should they wish to receive it. There are many young Australians who will welcome access to vaccination.

'Australia has been in contrast to 25 other countries, including the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand, in that it has not had a longstanding vaccine injury compensation scheme of this kind. It's fantastic we are moving forward on this important issue.

'We look forward to learning more specific details as to how the vaccine injury compensation scheme will operate,' Professor Slevin said.

Media enquiries: Karina Martin, PHAA Media Manager 0450 522 762 kmartin@phaa.net.au