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Shot in the arm for Australians as TGA approves AstraZeneca vaccine

Today’s approval of the AstraZeneca vaccine by the independent Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is a welcome step in the safe, timely rollout of vaccines to protect Australians from COVID-19, AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said.

“The AstraZeneca vaccine is largely being produced locally and is likely to be the one most Australians will receive. We welcome news of its approval for use by the independent regulator.

“Australia is the one of the only countries in the world to have approved COVID vaccinations without need to use emergency approval.

“The vaccine has gone through traditional approval processes by the TGA and Australians can therefore be assured of its safety and efficacy.

“It’s also the vaccine that can and will be delivered to Australians by trusted GPs in the safe and familiar setting of the GP surgery.

“Delivering the vaccine to as many Australians as possible, as quickly as possible will be an enormous challenge, but we can feel safe because Australia has not rushed through emergency approvals of these vaccines.

“The AMA has been successful in ensuring the Federal Government recognises GPs’ critical role in administering the AstraZeneca vaccine to the wider community.

“GPs and practice nurses offer best practice vaccination services for patients, properly assessing their suitability for vaccination and in the delivery and administration of the vaccine. With a new vaccine like this one, they can also provide support and advice to patients so that they can make an informed choice.

“Now we have the first batch of the Pfizer vaccine on Australian soil, and with the AstraZeneca vaccine soon to be produced here, Australia is well placed to undertake the biggest mass vaccination program of our lifetime.

The Government’s clear challenge will be to ensure that, as the supply of vaccines improves, it quickly expands the number of general practices where patients can be vaccinated so that it can meet its stated October deadline.” Dr Khorshid said.

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