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**END THE VACCINE BLAME GAME**

The AMA is today calling for more transparency in the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and an end to the ongoing blame game.

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said today that the war of words between the Commonwealth and Queensland Government over vaccination rates and supply was unhelpful and diminished public confidence in the vaccine roll out.

“Vaccines only protect the community when they are in people’s arms and governments needed to work together to maximise access to available vaccines. There is no excuse for them sitting in fridges and freezers,” Dr Khorshid said.

“The Australian community has been patient and understands the need for a well-managed vaccine rollout that carefully manages the administration of the vaccine on a priority basis with the limited supply we have access to.

“Stage 1a of the vaccine rollout has been underway for some time and any unnecessary delays in the roll out leave the community more vulnerable, endangers people’s health and put the population at risk of further lockdowns and more economic pain.

“The latest outbreaks in Queensland have been linked to unvaccinated health care workers.

“It is unacceptable that there are still unvaccinated doctors and nurses in our public hospitals caring for COVID-19 or even potential COVID-19, patients. We also know that our rural doctors in some parts of the country are struggling to access vaccinations for themselves as they often work hundreds of kilometres away from vaccination hubs.”

“All governments are accountable for the safe and timely delivery of a vaccine that will protect us from this rapid-moving, and very infectious virus.”

“The Commonwealth Government needs to be transparent on the number of vaccines that have already been distributed, and what the projected quantities will be going forward.

“The Government also needs to detail what contingency supply is being held so that the community has faith that there will be vaccine available when it comes time for their second dose.

“Data showing how many vaccines have been administered by providers compared to what has been supplied should be available to the community.

“Just a few weeks ago, some of this data was being published but it was quickly removed following criticism of delays in the rollout of vaccines. This does not help build confidence in the rollout of the vaccine at a time when we really need Australians to pick up the phone and make an appointment to protect themselves and their loved ones.

“The Commonwealth and the States and Territories have an obligation to tell the public what role the States and Territories will have in the rollout of vaccines beyond stage 1a.

“While some jurisdictions have moved to vaccinate people under stage 1b, there does not appear to be any agreed national plan which has caused public confusion.

“With the States and Territories due to get millions more doses of COVID-19 vaccines, there needs to be a national plan to make sure these valuable vaccines are safely administered into the arms of Australians and don’t get stuck in fridges and freezers.

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