12 July 2021

Hon Stephen Wade
Minister for Health and Wellbeing
Government of South Australia

Email: Stephen.wade@sa.gov.au
Ministertarzia@sa.gov.au

Dear Minister

Re: COVID-19 vaccination rollout in South Australian prisons

I write on behalf of the Australian Medical Association SA (AMA(SA)) Council, to ask for assurances that the residents and workforce of South Australia's prisons and correctional facilities are receiving age-appropriate COVID-19 vaccinations.

We thank you and your staff for efforts to vaccinate South Australians in complex and challenging circumstances. Our query comes after reports that the populations of the state's correctional facilities have not been prioritised for vaccination, which also raises questions about the vaccination status of the staffs of these facilities.

I am sure you are aware of international evidence, particularly from the US, that demonstrates the risk of rapid infection with this airborne virus within prisons, and the health risk that poses for all people in and in contact with these facilities – including members of vulnerable population groups such as Indigenous people. The presence in Australia of the more contagious Delta variant multiplies this risk.

It would be appreciated if you can respond with detail about what we hope is a focused and rapid vaccination rollout in the state's correctional facilities. If necessary, we ask that the rollout be expedited to prevent a mass outbreak with the potential for serious repercussions for individuals and the broader population. AMA(SA) Council and our members with expertise in this area would welcome the opportunity to help manage this process if needed.

Please contact me at any time to discuss this, via Executive Assistant Mrs Claudia Baccanello on 8361 0109 or at claudia@amasa.org.au.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michelle Atchison
President

CC: The Hon Vincent Tarzia MP, Minister for Correctional Services

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