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**AMA PROPOSAL FOR VACCINE INDEMNITY ADOPTED BY  
 NATIONAL CABINET**

*New measures from National Cabinet help combat COVID-19, AMA says*

The introduction of a no-fault indemnity scheme for GPs and vaccine providers, proposed by the AMA, is welcome news and will give GPs more confidence providing vaccines, and peace of mind to patients, the AMA said today.

This and other decisions made by National Cabinet last night, including mandatory vaccination for quarantine and aged care health workers and a day-16 COVID test, will help to combat the threat of COVID-19.

AMA president, Dr Omar Khorshid said the new indemnity scheme gives patients and doctors alike yet another reason to continue to support the COVID-19 vaccine roll out.

“Nearly all patients and doctors will never need to use the indemnity scheme, but having it in place will give peace of mind to patients and doctors alike,” Dr Khorshid said.

“We first proposed such a scheme in January and have worked closely with Government to get the insurance scheme introduced.

“For such a scheme to be effective and fair, we knew it needed to cover all vaccines, administered to all age groups and be applied retrospectively, so we are really pleased the government has taken this on board.

“It means in the very rare circumstances where patients believe they have been injured by a vaccine, they can access support or compensation if required without the need to include their doctor or nurse in legal action.

“Risk is part of any medical procedure and the vaccine program is no different. The risks of COVID-19 far exceed the very low risk of serious adverse events from the COVID-19 vaccines.”

“We will now work with government to extend the Medicare support for COVID-19 vaccine consultations to Australians under the age of 50, in order to support GPs to provide information to patients around the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccines and assist patients in making an informed decision, as announced by the Prime Minister.

Dr Khorshid said the decision to mandate vaccination for aged care health workers was a positive move, and was again something the AMA had called on governments to consider.

“We’ve been very strong on this because our aged care workers are looking after the most vulnerable people in our community, who face very high risk of serious illness or death if they do contract COVID-19 in an aged care facility.

“The initial focus on the aged care residents was a reasonable decision at the time, but the low rate of vaccination of aged care workers is unacceptable and we need to redouble our efforts to get them fully vaccinated as soon as possible.

“We also welcome sensible changes to quarantine arrangements. The day 16 test for returned travellers, mandatory vaccination and testing for quarantine workers and separation of high and low risk travellers in quarantine are all logical steps and all overdue given the breaches of quarantine that are currently impacting the lives of almost every Australian,” Dr Khorshid said.

However, the AMA believes National Cabinet for months now has failed to agree on a nationally consistent approach to outbreaks and agreed triggers for lockdown, border closures and other social restrictions.

“National Cabinet must recognise that an outbreak in one city or state puts the whole country at risk. An agreed approach would detail the appropriate triggers for lockdown, border closures and other social restrictions like limits on crowds at sporting events and help protect the whole country from COVID-19.

“Throughout the pandemic we have seen different rules at different times in different states. This is very frustrating and undermines public confidence in important public health measures.”

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