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Dale Gilson
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Dear Mr Gilson

Thank you for your correspondence to Martin Foley MP, Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services regarding Australia's coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination program and prioritisation for funeral directors. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I acknowledge the vital contribution of funeral directors to our society and the need for workers in this sector to engage with vulnerable and prioritised sectors such as healthcare and aged care.

The Victorian Government is working closely with the Australian Government to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination program in Victoria, and I note that you have also written to the Federal Health Minister with your concerns.

The process of determining priority populations for vaccination is determined at a national level by the Australian Government. This ensures a consistent and equitable distribution nationwide. The Australian Government has determined that funeral directors are not eligible as a cohort to be vaccinated under Phase 1a or 1b of the vaccination program.

While the Australian Government determines the broad categories for eligibility under the various phases, the Victorian Government is responsible for applying these definitions in the rollout of the state-led vaccination program.

To this end, the Victorian Government has established the Victorian Prioritisation Committee (the Committee), which assesses outlier requests for prioritisation. These requests are assessed alongside current research, guidelines, and policies, and take into account the risk of incursion, consequence or transmission/outbreak.

The Committee has decided that those who are funeral directors are not eligible for Phase 1b of the COVID-19 Vaccination program in Victoria. Please review the Australian Government's Phase 1b advice at www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/phase-1b for further information on eligibility criteria and proof required to access immunisation.

Due to recent changes to COVID-19 vaccine eligibility, all individuals aged 50 years and over are eligible from 3 May 2021 to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine at General Practice Respiratory Clinics and state vaccination centres. From 17 May 2021, people 50 years and over can receive the AstraZeneca vaccine at a participating general practice.

I sincerely appreciate your patience and the support of the Australian Funeral Directors Association as we continue to navigate the multiple facets of the vaccination program implementation.

We are grateful to every Victorian who has played a part in containing the spread of COVID-19. We ask that all Victorians continue to act in ways that will keep transmission low and ensure that Victoria can stay safe and open. If you require any further information, I encourage you to visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus or call the COVID-19 hotline on 1800 675 398 for the most up-to-date information and advice.

I trust this information has been of assistance to you and thank you again for taking the time to write to me about this matter.

Yours sincerely



Naomi Bromley
Deputy Secretary
Engagement and Delivery
COVID-19 Response

17/05/2021