

MEDIA RELEASE

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Faster pharmacy vaccine roll-out would accelerate end of lockdown era: new report

New research by The McKell Institute has found accelerating the roll-out of vaccines into pharmacies could help Australia reach its vaccination target of 80 per cent up to two months faster than on current projections, avoiding \$12.3 billion of economic costs.

The new report, '[The Missing Link: How Pharmacies Can Accelerate Australia's Vaccine Roll-Out](#),' has also found the federal government's failure to hit its own roadmap target on vaccinations via pharmacies (target of 2,000 pharmacies by July 1 versus reality of <65 pharmacies) slowed the nation's vaccination efforts to the tune of 1 million doses.

However, if the government was able to swiftly engage the approximately 4,000 Australian pharmacies eligible to administer vaccines, it could accelerate the race to vaccinate 80 per cent of the population to 128 days, down from 184 days on current projections.

The McKell Institute's Executive Director Michael Buckland said the research showed it was incumbent upon the federal government to pull out all stops to ensure pharmacies were brought online.

"The government now understands we are in a war against COVID-19, so it's baffling it's been so slow to deploy one of our most powerful divisions – the nation's pharmacies," Mr Buckland said.

"The vaccine supply issues have been resolved, but it's not much good having the ammunition if you don't get it into the hands of people who know how to use it.

"Recent moves to accelerate the use of pharmacies in the wake of lockdowns are welcome. But in reality the government shouldn't rest until every one of the four thousand eligible Australians pharmacies is administering vaccinations on a daily basis.

"It's natural to focus on conscientious objectors as an impediment to Australia's vaccine rollout, but the evidence indicates the administrative difficulties people face are a bigger problem. Making jabs available at the local pharmacy would go a long way to fixing this.

"Although it's strange that the pharmacies have been under-utilised to date, the important thing now is that the government moves swiftly to get all 4,000 delivering vaccines immediately. We all want to see the back of lockdowns, and if the government moves swiftly it will save us all two months and \$12 billion.

"In a positive, our projections find that if all pharmacies deliver vaccines there is hope that we can complete the roll-out before Christmas."

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The full report can be found here.