



Media contact: Vanessa Sprunt

Mobile: 0427 953 993

Email: vanessa.sprunt@audit.wa.gov.au

18 November 2021

Mass COVID-19 vaccine roll-out largely effective but some vulnerable people and areas missing out, partly due to inequitable access

The Auditor General today tabled in Parliament a report on [WA's COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out](#).

Auditor General Ms Caroline Spencer said the State's vaccine roll-out has been effective for many people and allowed the WA Department of Health to be confident of meeting its 80% vaccination target by the end of 2021.

'But there are some places and people, many of them at a higher risk to the health impacts of an outbreak, that have been missed by the roll-out so far.

'While this is partly due to vaccine hesitancy, inequitable access has also had an impact. For some people, making an appointment online and travelling was not practical, and some areas did not have local State-run clinics until recently, for example a clinic was only opened in Armadale on 18 October 2021,' Ms Spencer said.

While the Department has demonstrated agility in its response to frequent policy changes and, in the early stages, uncertain vaccine supply, there has also been a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities between the State and Commonwealth governments, and a lack of sustained coordination and planning for some of the most vulnerable and hard to reach communities, including Aboriginal people in metropolitan Perth.

At the start of the program, Aboriginal people were identified as high-risk and were one of the first eligible groups to be vaccinated. At 9 November, only 31% of Aboriginal people were fully vaccinated compared to 67.8% of the State overall. Based on current progress, this will only increase to around 40% by December 2021.

There is limited information on vaccination rates among other hard to reach groups, like the homeless or the culturally and linguistically diverse. These vulnerable groups are at increased risk of health impacts in a COVID-19 outbreak.

The State and Commonwealth governments are now actively shifting resources to improve access for under-vaccinated groups with pop-up and walk-in clinics and targeted outreach and in-reach.

'However, as these approaches tend to be slower and less predictable than mass clinics, based on current Department data, demographically and geographically consistent vaccination rates of 80% may not be achieved until mid-2022,' Ms Spencer said.

The report recommends the Department put coordinated plans in place to prioritise vaccine access for clinically vulnerable groups to minimise the impact from COVID-19 outbreaks, and articulate plans for the conclusion of the emergency vaccination roll-out, incorporating lessons learned from the rollout.

Report resources

- [PDF version](#)
- [summary video](#)