

## OPEN LETTER TO AUSTRALIA

Dear Australia,

The Nurses of Australia are thinking of you in this uncertain time, brought about by the unpredictability of COVID-19; it has been tough for us all.

We constantly think about those we tested, cared for, and others we had to say goodbye to.

We held your hands, calmed your fears, and told you what we knew.

We organised health teams, new systems of care, looked after the elderly and vulnerable, advised government on policy, trained staff, and fought hard to deliver the best care we all deserve.

At times, we had to connect with you through plastic visors and full-length personal protective equipment, but we hope you know how hard we have worked, how hard this has impacted us personally and professionally, but most of all we hope you know how much we care.

We have seen first-hand and heard thousands of stories about how damaging COVID-19 can be. Many of us are left with unwanted lingering side-effects of the virus – symptoms we are just now starting to understand.

Last year, all we wished for was a vaccine to turbo-charge our fight and to get back to 'normal'. And now we have it. Nurses vaccinate to care for you, ourselves, and our loved ones.

Who will you vaccinate for?

We know many people are worried about the quality of the vaccines available, their potential side-effects and that no-one wants to be first. We understand. It is a scary time. However, we implore you to look at the facts:

- The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine was approved for use in Australia on 16 February 2021 following the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) rigorous assessment and approval process. This includes assessment of its safety, quality, and effectiveness
- The Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine was approved by the TGA for use in Australia on 25 January 2021, after a rigorous assessment and approval process. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has been provisionally approved by the TGAs for individuals 16 years and older
- As of late May 2021, there have been 4.2 million doses given in Australia, and 493,000 people are fully vaccinated. 15% of the population has had one dose
- All health workers, airport and quarantine staff are being vaccinated to ensure they can serve the community safely
- Over 40,000 nurses and midwives have completed COVID Vaccination Training and Nurse Immunisation qualifications in the past six months. We are work-ready to deliver the vaccines safely to you

We have been there with you from your early childhood and adolescence. We immunised you against rubella and tetanus, mended your broken bones, saw you in emergency, in your homes and your schools, cared for you in intensive care, supported your family member living with a disability, and we have been there with you when you had to say goodbye to your parents.

We are here for you during this time as well.

With winter now here, we the nursing profession of Australia want you to know that getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is the best chance you have of protecting you and your loved ones.

Take it from us, from your nurses, get your COVID-19 vaccination as soon as you can.

Warmest regards,



Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward

Chief Executive Officer

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