

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Written Question on Notice, 6 September 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000222

Public information campaign for First nations' communities

Written

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

4. Please indicate all public information campaigns the Department is administering or co-ordinating with other agencies to address the following in First Nations' communities:
 - a.) Misinformation; and
 - b.) Vaccine hesitancy.
5. Please indicate expenditure on campaigns referenced above.

Answer:

Providing tailored communication for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences has been a priority for the Department since the beginning of the pandemic. Communication activities, including both advertising and public relations, have focused on providing information on the rollout of the program and addressing misinformation and hesitancy.

The Department has engaged an Indigenous-owned agency, Carbon Creative to deliver a comprehensive range of culturally appropriate communication. This includes bespoke editorial, social media resources and advertising materials to reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.

At each stage of the national COVID-19 vaccine campaign, advertising materials are adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences, including creation of custom designs and materials. These include:

- An adaptation of the 'How to Stay Informed' campaign from January 2021.
- An adaptation of the advertising campaign to inform the public about vaccine approval processes, prioritisation of groups and dosage requirements from March 2021.
- Advertising featuring Dr Mark Wenitong (Indigenous doctor) advising on the specific phases of the rollout for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The mainstream campaign 'Arm Yourself' has been adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences and is called "Protect Yourself". This commenced on 11 July.
- Advertising to support the NSW outbreak has been adapted to reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in regional (Western) NSW and utilised in subsequent outbreaks.
- Bespoke creative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally, including via mainstream media, which commenced 27 September 2021. It features important information for Indigenous people about the risk of catching the COVID-19 Delta variant, getting the vaccine and listening to local advice to keep COVID safe.
- The 'For All of Us' campaign was launched on 7 November 2021 across television, social and print channels. This campaign was specifically developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences, to celebrate the uniqueness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and uses that as a real reason to vaccinate. The creative materials for this campaign have also been distributed via the Department's social media and online channels.
- The '5 to 11 year olds' campaign, adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences, launched on 10 January 2022, coinciding with the start of the vaccine rollout for this age cohort. This campaign has been developed to advise and reassure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents about the TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine being available and recommended for children aged to 5 to 11 years.
- An indigenous adaption of the mainstream Booster campaign went into market 14 January 2022.

Paid advertising is only one component of the information campaign. The communication approach also uses First Nations' community leaders and members to communicate vaccine-related information and to address concerns in a culturally safe and appropriate way. Videos have been developed with Indigenous community leaders, spokespeople, and healthcare workers, including Professor Tom Calma, Professor James Ward, Professor Marcia Langton, Dr Mark Wenitong, Dr Karen Nicholls, and Dr Marilyn Clarke, Adam Goodes and Stacey Porter.

Local community members also feature in videos, sharing their vaccination stories. These videos, along with other communication materials, such as social media content and posters addressing common misinformation, designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences are available at: www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-vaccinated-for-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-indigenous.

A fortnightly e-newsletter (available at: www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-key-health-updates-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities) is sent to more than 900 community organisations and individuals providing the latest COVID-19 and vaccine information and connecting them to resources they can share with their communities.

The Department has partnerships with First Nations' media organisations, including the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS), Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), Blackstar Queensland, Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media (PAKAM), Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA), and Aboriginal TV Channel 4 Darwin. These partnerships ensure fact-checked vaccine messaging, in both English and First Nations' languages, is reaching regional and rural parts of Australia through trusted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

In addition to reaching First Nations' people through the mainstream media buy, an additional \$1.76 million (GST exclusive) has been spent on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people specific media from 27 January 2021 to 12 January 2022, with an additional 287,230 being spent on partnerships and translations.

In response to the outbreak in western NSW in 2021, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), Australian Medical Assistance Teams, the NSW Government, the National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Department of Health worked together to ensure affected communities were aware of the risks of COVID-19 and inform communities that the best way to protect themselves is by getting vaccinated. These grassroots campaigns are now taking place across the country via Indigenous Liaison Officers and workers in Indigenous communities who are educating people about the risks of COVID-19 and encouraging Indigenous people to get vaccinated. This model of local engagement has been replicated during outbreaks in other States and Territories.