

PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

CC: The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP
Senator The Hon. Marise Payne
The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
The Hon. Zed Seselja MP

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you out of our grave concern regarding the state of global vaccine inequity, and the opportunity we believe Australia has to help address this vital issue affecting us all.

The emergence of Omicron shows how the virus mutates when left unchecked: more cases, more mutations and more chance of vaccine-resistant strains.

The Australian Government has made important contributions to date to help our Indo-Pacific neighbours access vaccines and support national vaccine roll-outs, along with initial investments to the international effort to help vaccinate low income nations through the COVAX AMC. But this crisis is far from over.

Despite G20 commitments in October to vaccinate at least 40 per cent of the world's population in all countries by the end of 2021 and 70 per cent by mid-2022, we are dangerously off-track.

We are calling for further urgent action by the Australian Government to commit its fair share to vaccinate the world and further assist our region.

We are seeking the Australian Government to take the following three further critical steps:

1. Continue to add our weight to tackling global vaccine inequity

Only three per cent of people in low-income countries are fully vaccinated and case numbers are increasing. This is unfair, immoral, dangerous for those communities and dangerous for Australia. Looking forward, the WHO forecasts that there will be sufficient doses to achieve the global vaccination targets if there is equitable distribution.

The COVAX AMC Facility leverages global expertise in distributing and administering vaccines to lower transaction costs, mitigate the risk of supply shortages, get a better price and allocate vaccines equitably. This is the best global mechanism Australia can fund to get vaccines to low-income countries.

→ Australia should commit an additional \$250 million to the COVAX AMC Facility.

2. Use our partnerships to tackle vaccine hesitancy

Australia has pledged 60 million vaccines for the region by the end of 2022. But the problem right now is vaccine hesitancy and getting shots into arms.

Despite supply, our nearest neighbour, Papua New Guinea, is only two per cent fully vaccinated and the Solomon Islands just over five per cent.

→ Australia should commit \$50 million from the existing \$523m Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative into addressing vaccine hesitancy in the Indo-Pacific.

3. Reduce the chance of future outbreaks, variants and pandemics

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) has developed a plan to accelerate the end of COVID-19 while protecting the world from future pandemics, building on what we've learned in the past 18 months.

Its ambitious programs include: reducing the vaccine development timeline to a 100-day moonshot; developing a library of prototype vaccines; developing vaccines against known threats; and supporting enhancing vaccine manufacturing capacity.

→ *Australia should commit \$100 million to the CEPI replenishment.*

We believe these investments are essential to combatting COVID-19.

The undersigned signatories represent a cross-section of leading voices in public health, international development, medicine and business who stand ready to support these measures.



**Professor Brendan Crabb AC PhD FAA
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Director and CEO, Burnet Institute

Chair, Australian Global Health Alliance

Chair, Pacific Friends of Global Health



**Professor Fiona Stanley AC FAA FASSA
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Rev Tim Costello AO

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Jane Halton AO PSM FAICD FIPPA

*Chair, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness
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*Honorary Professor, School of Health and
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Jennifer A. Westacott AO

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