

22 March 2021

Local Blue Mountains general practices join the fight against COVID-19

This week, general practices in the Nepean Blue Mountains region start the staged roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations under [Phase 1b of the Federal Government's Vaccination Roll-out Strategy](#).

Wentworth Healthcare, the provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, has been working closely with the Department of Health to support local healthcare providers to prepare for the roll-out, which will take a staged approach over the next four weeks.

[Phase 1b includes](#) vulnerable groups, such as older people aged over 70, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples aged over 55, critical and high risk workers including healthcare, defence, police, fire, emergency services, meat processing and people with certain underlying medical conditions.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay said, "We are proud that so many general practices in our region have agreed to be COVID-19 vaccine providers and that they are rising to the many challenges of this unprecedented national roll-out."

"We have 13 practices in the Nepean Blue Mountains commencing vaccinations next week with four of these available in Blue Mountains including **Winmalee Medical Centre, Blackheath Family Medical Centre, Lower Mountains Family Practice and Upper Mountains Medical Centre**. Approximately 70 more practices coming online across the region within the next four weeks. Given the gradual upscaling of practices in the region, and the current limited supply of vaccines nationally, not everyone will be able to secure an appointment in the first few weeks," she said.

"We ask the community to be patient with practices, and particularly practice staff, when trying to book an appointment. There will be more opportunities for vaccination as more GPs gradually come on board. The Federal Government has committed to making sure that every Australian who wants a vaccine, will be able to be vaccinated," said Ms Reay.

In addition to general practices, the region's three GP lead COVID-19 Respiratory Clinics, that have been conducting testing over the past year, will also be offering vaccinations. The **Hazelbrook Respiratory Clinic**, located at Hazelbrook General Practice, 9 Rosedale Avenue, and run by Hazelbrook General Practice, is commencing vaccinations on **Monday 29 March**.

The Hazelbrook Respiratory Clinic will be offering COVID-19 vaccinations each morning from **8.30am- 12.30pm** and COVID-19 testing and assessment each afternoon from **1.30pm -5.30pm**.

All bookings for both testing and vaccination should be made online. For testing via [HotDoc](#) via and for vaccination via the [Eligibility Checker](#).



Dr Louise McDonnell, from Hazelbrook General Practice said, “I encourage everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated. Initially the clinic will offer vaccination to the most vulnerable and is also available for non-Medicare eligible patients (such as overseas visitors) who meet the current criteria. Over time, as vaccine supply increases, we will be able offer the vaccine to the wider population.”

Senator for Western Sydney, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, said services will come online from Monday 22 March 2021.

“Phase 1b of the rollout is focused on delivering COVID-19 vaccines for our elderly and immunocompromised,” Senator Payne said.

“Those eligible for Phase 1b will be able to find a vaccination provider through the new national vaccination information and location service, at the [Department of Health website](#).

“This will enable people to locate their nearest general practice or GP led Respiratory Clinic providing vaccinations and link through to their online booking system or phone number to make the appointment.

“Vaccines are critical in our fight against the COVID-19 virus and I urge everyone in the Nepean, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury regions to come forward and get vaccinated when they are able to. It will protect themselves, their family, and their community.”

Member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman, welcomed the rollout through GP practices.

“It will require patience but I know many people have their lives on hold and are hoping a successful roll out will allow them more normality,” she said.

“I know Blue Mountains GPs will do the best they can.”

People eligible for vaccination under Phase 1b of the roll-out will be able to find vaccination providers through the national [Eligibility Checker](#) located on *healthdirect*. This tool enables people to locate their nearest provider and link through to their online booking system or phone number to make the appointment. Appointment availability will increase as more general practices come on board and establish their systems and vaccine supply.

Frequently Asked Questions

How to I know if I am eligible under Phase 1b

Go to Department of Health website. Using the [Eligibility Checker](#) and answering the prompted questions, you can find out which phase of the roll-out you are eligible for. If you **are not yet eligible**, you will be able to register your interest so that you can be notified when you are able to book.

How do I book an appointment of vaccination?

If the [Eligibility Checker](#) finds that you are **eligible under Phase1b**, it will show you vaccination providers close to your postcode where you can book an appointment online or via phone.

Will I be able to choose where I can book?

You will be able to view and select practice locations based on the postcode you enter. More vaccination locations will come on board progressively over the next four weeks.



What happens if there are no clinics or appointments in my area?

A list of Commonwealth vaccination clinics, participating general practices, and state and territory vaccination clinics will be updated and made available as they progressively come on board over the next few weeks.

Do I have to use the Eligibility Checker in order to book?

The [Eligibility Checker](#) is a simple way to find out if you are currently eligible and to book an appointments, or help you register to be notified if you are part of a later phase. If you prefer to book appointments directly at a participating general practice or Commonwealth state vaccination clinic, you can contact them directly to do so.

Useful links

Hazelbrook GP led Respiratory Clinic Online Booking for Testing:

<https://www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/hazelbrook-NSW-2779/hazelbrook-respiratory-clinic/doctors?purpose=respiratory>

National COVID-19 Roll-out Strategy (Department of Health):

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/01/covid-19-vaccination-australia-s-covid-19-vaccine-national-roll-out-strategy.pdf>

Priority groups for COVID-19 Vaccination Program Phase 1b (Department of Health):

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/03/priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-program-phase-1b.pdf>

National Eligibility Checker (Department of Health via *healthdirect*):

<https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility>

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