



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care**

17 March 2021

At the end of an important day in Australia's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, I write to thank you on behalf of the Australian Government.

General practices like yours have played a critical role in keeping Australians healthy during the pandemic. And now, you have chosen to support your local community even further by participating in the COVID-19 vaccination program which is deeply appreciated.

The launch of the Vaccine Information and Location Finder marks the beginning of Phase 1b of the rollout. The first day was always going to bring an initial and understandable surge and I particularly want to thank you and your practice for your patience. Overall, Healthdirect's website has held up well and more practices will be joining the rollout each week, as the supply of locally produced AstraZeneca vaccine becomes available. I'm confident we are well placed to ensure the six million Australians eligible for vaccination in Phase 1b will be protected.

Some people will seek to make appointments immediately. Indeed, your practice may have already experienced strong demand.

I want to re-emphasise all practices are free to manage bookings as they see fit over multiple weeks. This includes booking patients based on vaccine availability, local priority populations and practice capacity. These are decisions your practice can make according to your circumstances. You are best placed to determine which of your patients in Phase 1b are most in need and how to prioritise them.

To assist, GP Respiratory Clinics will be listed in the service finder in the next two days. General practices can then refer patients – particularly non-regular patients – to a GP Respiratory Clinic for vaccination.

This is the beginning of our general program of vaccination. There will be more challenging days ahead, but I know Australia's health system – including our vital general practices – is up to the task. This has been proven time and again throughout this pandemic. You are helping to save lives and protect livelihoods, and I thank you for your patience and your efforts.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Greg Hunt'.

Greg Hunt