

# Media release

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## COVID-19 vaccine roll-out showcases hospital pharmacists' expert stewardship

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is proudly celebrating the efforts of hospital pharmacists and technicians across the country following yesterday's successful Day 1 of Australia's COVID-19 vaccination program.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says hospital pharmacists and technicians have been tirelessly preparing for their crucial part in the roll-out, ensuring that safety and efficacy remain central to Australia's COVID-19 vaccination effort.

'After spending months preparing for their central role in the safe and secure administration of the biggest vaccination program in history, we are now seeing many examples of the great work of pharmacists and technicians across Australia as they deftly co-ordinate the ultra-low temperature storage, supply and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines; and undertake the thawing, diluting, preparing, and drawing-up vaccine doses. In some hospitals, pharmacists will also be administering COVID-19 vaccinations.

'Sixteen hospitals – all of which are staffed by SHPA Members – are involved in the Phase 1a roll-out this week, which will see the vaccination of hotel quarantine workers, border force workers, hospital workers in intensive care units, emergency departments, and those in aged care.'

Spear-heading the efforts of Australia's hospital pharmacists are many SHPA Members, who put their preparation into action as the first doses of the vaccine arrived in hospitals around Australia yesterday.

[Featured on 9News](#), SHPA Fellow and Chair of the Compounding Services Leadership Committee Branko Radojkovic gave Prime Minister Scott Morrison insight into pharmacist expertise, as he prepared a simulated vaccine for at the Sydney Local health district vaccination hub at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Camperdown.

Meanwhile, in the Northern Territory, NT Health Medicines Management Executive Director A/Prof Bhavini Patel, the pharmacist in charge of rolling out NT's vaccine program, [told the ABC](#) that the NT will be looking at vaccine roll-out programs across the globe to help determine the best way to disseminate the vaccine, while ensuring no vaccine goes to waste.

'We'll have a catch-up list of people ... on stand-by to make sure we don't waste a single dose.'

The Royal Adelaide Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre in South Australia received their first 4,000 doses yesterday, with SHPA past-President Vaughn Eaton – Director, SA Pharmacy of the SA Local Health Network, and recipient of SHPA's 2020 Medal of Merit award – helping ensure the vaccines were stored in special ultra-low temperature freezers in this [SA Health video](#).

In Victoria, Tom Chynoweth, Deputy Director of Pharmacy at Monash Health in Victoria demonstrated how he and his team will ensure the Pfizer vaccine will be kept at minus 70 degrees, transferring the vaccine into the freezer in under 90 seconds, while Dr Erica Tong, Deputy Director at The Alfred – and 2020 recipient of SHPA’s Clinical Pharmacy Award – [told The Age](#) that she’s been practising for months with her colleagues at The Alfred in Melbourne.

‘We’ve been simulating everything from when the vaccine arrives to loading it into the freezer ... so the end-to-end process, including reconstituting with vials of saline, drawing up, labelling, and there’s been full simulation in our [vaccination] clinic space as well that the pharmacists have been involved in and how that will run.’

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**About SHPA**

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia’s health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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