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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Vaccination the key to freedom for transplant community**

The Board of Transplant Australia today urged all transplant recipients in Australia to vaccinate against COVID-19 stating it was the key to returning to a life of normality.

Transplant Australia last evening hosted a record-breaking ZOOM Webinar on COVID vaccination with almost 2,000 recipients, those waiting for a transplant, those on dialysis, nurses and doctors logging on from across Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

Transplant Australia Medical Director, Professor Richard Allen, said it was an extraordinary response, 10 times more than we had anticipated, and showed the level of interest in vaccination in the transplant community.

“We aimed to dispel many of myths and give confidence to recipients that they could be vaccinated safely and that it would significantly help protect them against COVID-19. We achieved that and answered many questions. Transplant Australia strongly recommends vaccination and encourages all recipients to discuss vaccination with their transplant centre.” Professor Allen said.

The Webinar was co-hosted by the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Transplant Nurses Association. It was proudly supported by Astellas.

TSANZ President, Professor Toby Coates said Australia was in an enviable position in the world being able to optimize the care for patients with a government that had successfully managed the virus. “We are all very eager to help the federal and state government with the logistics of vaccination rollout.”

TNA President Libby John said it was important to provide recipients with evidence-based advice and the TNA was pleased to support the webinar. “Vaccination will give our transplant recipients the confidence to get out of the house, meet up with friends and to attend clinics in person again.”

The two key speakers were Professor Steve Chadban, Past-President TSANZ and Chair of the Transplant Liaison Reference Group, Co-Chair, COVID-19 National Transplantation and Donation Rapid Response Taskforce and Dr Peter Boan, Infectious Diseases Physician and Microbiologist, Member, COVID-19 National Transplantation and Donation Rapid Response Taskforce.



Professor Chadban said: “as the risks of becoming infected and of developing severe outcomes from COVID were higher for organ transplant recipients than for the general community, and as early data on vaccination of transplant recipients suggests similar safety to the general population, it makes good sense for transplant recipients to be immunized for COVID as soon as possible”.

Transplant Australia agrees with the recommendation of the World Transplant Games Federation Medical Committee.

It states: “The development of vaccines offers a very positive means of potentially controlling COVID-19 and ultimately allowing a return to a more normal way of life.

“Transplant patients are immuno-suppressed and at risk of infection. We strongly recommend that you take the vaccine unless there is a clear medical contraindication such as previous severe allergic reactions to vaccination, which is very rare. Owing to the variable availability of the types of vaccine in your country, we would advise that you consult with your transplant specialist if you have any doubt.”

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