



***MEDIA RELEASE***

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## **Monkeypox vaccine a breakthrough moment**

The Federal Government's procurement of Monkeypox (MPX) vaccines is a breakthrough moment for people at risk of contracting the virus and has been warmly welcomed by the AFAO and ASHM.

The Government has today announced it has secured 450,000 doses of the MPX vaccine. 22,000 doses of the vaccine will arrive in Australia later this week with the balance to arrive later in the year and in 2023 for populations most at risk of transmission through GP surgeries and medical centres.

All but two of the 58 reported cases in Australia have been among travellers returning from overseas. Gay and bisexual men are at most risk of MPX, although it is not a sexually transmitted infection.

Heath Paynter, acting CEO of AFAO, commended the Commonwealth for securing the vaccines.

"The swift procurement of these vaccines is a very positive step. While local transmission of Monkeypox has so far been limited, we can't rely on that to continue. Cities such as London, Montreal, Lisbon and Madrid are all dealing with significant community transmission.

"The availability of MPX vaccine for people who need it is a critical forward defence against transmission. It will help people look after their own health as well as that of people they are intimate with.

"Gay and bisexual men are already taking Monkeypox very seriously, monitoring for symptoms and regularly seeking medical advice. This is a very welcome additional tool."

Alexis Apostolellis, CEO of ASHM said: "Australia's clinical workforce has learned a lot over the past two months about how to detect, treat and prevent monkeypox, and vaccination is the critical next step.



Dr Nick Medland, sexual health specialist, ASHM president and researcher at the Kirby Institute said: “We expect the outbreak will begin to slow after 75,000 members of our community have had one dose of the vaccine and may not be eliminated until 250,000 doses have been administered to those who need them most.

“We’re working closely with affected communities to ensure the health system is ready to deliver a safe and equitable vaccine rollout. We know from COVID-19 and from HIV that our responses to infectious diseases are only effective when clinicians work hand-in-hand with the people most affected.”

In response to the evolving monkeypox situation, ASHM and AFAO are forming a National MPX Taskforce, which will provide leadership and policy advice on community engagement, clinical management, education and prevention. The Taskforce co-chairs will be AFAO’s Acting CEO, Heath Paynter, and ASHM’s President, Dr Nick Medland.

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