



Australian High Commission
Vanuatu

27 August 2020

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Australia supporting Vanuatu's access to COVID-19 vaccines

On 26 August, the Honourable Minister of Health Silas Bule met with Australia's High Commissioner Her Excellency Sarah deZoeten to discuss Australia's ongoing efforts and financial contribution to support Vanuatu's health preparations for COVID-19, including access to COVID-19 vaccines.

This follows the announcement by Australia's Foreign Minister, Health Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific that Australia will invest \$80 million (VUV6 billion) in the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) to help secure COVID-19 vaccines for Pacific Island and Southeast Asian countries, including Vanuatu.

"The AMC will address the acute phase of the pandemic in the first instance and aims to ensure access to doses to protect the most vulnerable in countries, such as health workers and the elderly. Australia is committed to working closely with our neighbours in the Pacific to secure early and equitable access to a COVID-19 vaccine," said Australia's High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Her Excellency Sarah deZoeten.

The Honourable Minister of Health Silas Bule welcomed this announcement from Australia, saying that the news is timely for the region as everyone has been waiting patiently to hear this news especially Vanuatu. Minister Bule said the opening of borders in the region depends on the arrival of the vaccine to our shores as well as the economic recovery particularly for the tourism industry.

"We thank the Australian Government for the continued support for the Pacific region including Vanuatu for ensuring that we have access to the vaccine as soon as it is out in the market," said Minister Bule.

Australia's investment builds on its strong support for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Australia will continue to promote health security in the Pacific region through its role as the Vice-Chair of the Gavi Board. Access to vaccines will play a critical role in the economic recovery of the region from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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*Australia's High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Her Excellency Sarah deZoeten,
and Minister of Health, Honourable Silas Bule.*

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Australian High Commission

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