

**DATE:** 15 March 2021

### **COVID-19 vaccination hub opens at John Hunter Hospital**

It's all hands on deck today with the first major COVID-19 vaccination hub in the Hunter New England Local Health District opening at John Hunter Hospital.

The hub is one of five major hubs across the state, which will also begin the dispatch of vaccine to 15 satellite sites in rural and regional areas across the District in the coming weeks.

Hunter New England Local Health District Chief Executive, Mr Michael DiRienzo, said the response to the hub has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Frontline healthcare workers will receive their first doses of the Pfizer vaccine today, thanks to the outstanding efforts of our staff who worked quickly to make this hub a possibility.

"Our priority has always been to ensure our staff have access to vaccination facilities as close to their homes as possible, and we are extremely excited to see this process start today.

"We are humbled to be playing such a significant role in Australia's vaccine rollout, and are incredibly grateful that we can now offer our hard-working frontline staff protection against the virus," said Mr DiRienzo.

Nurse Unit Manager of the John Hunter Hospital COVID-19 Ward, Alexandra Mexon, was excited to be the first person to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at John Hunter Hospital.

"While working in the COVID-19 ward I have witnessed the devastating effects of the virus first-hand. This is why I have chosen to have the vaccine today.

"The jab was quick and I barely felt a thing. The whole process was simple and while it is not mandatory, I would encourage all everyone to get the vaccine as soon as they are able.

"I definitely feel that extra sense of security in caring for our patients now that I've been vaccinated," she said.

The vaccination hub and satellite sites will initially focus on frontline healthcare workers as part of Phase 1A of the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccination rollout, and will be followed by a wider rollout of AstraZeneca vaccine, including to the general public through the GP network.

Planning for local satellite sites is now in the final stages, with more information expected to be available in the coming weeks.

NSW is working closely with the Australian Government to implement a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccination program.

For the latest information on the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the [NSW Health website](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx).