

Now is the time to drive home the vaccine message

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The Consumers Health Forum welcomes the stepped-up campaign promoting COVID-19 vaccinations and says it should be just the start of a broader community-based campaign.

"While Australia still needs more supplies of preferred vaccines, it is important that promotion of vaccination and preparation for an expanded rollout of vaccines are undertaken right now," the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said.

"We remain concerned that the levels of vaccine supply are insufficient to meet demand and that there is patchy or variable access to the supply we do have.

"During this period of shortages there is the opportunity to respond to the strong consumer thirst for factual information and boost the urgently-needed rallying messages to encourage all Australians to get vaccinated.

"As recent polling and research has shown there is a worrying level of vaccine hesitancy. Melbourne Institute research shows the rate of hesitancy in the community at over 40 per cent. See the Institute's [Vaccine Hesitancy Report Card](#)

"With these significant levels of hesitancy in the community, we need to create a groundswell of intent to vaccinate, and it is likely that will take some time to persuade many vaccine doubters.

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"Successful public health campaigns that engage consumers need to be multi-faceted, need to recognise varying levels of health literacy in the community and need to rely on trusted sources of information and assurance such as health care providers and peer networks.

"Advertising campaigns on their own need to be accompanied by other strategies to answer consumers' questions, help those who are hesitant overcome their hesitancy and motivate people in a positive way to get vaccinated once they have weighed up their choices.

"CHF recommends that the national advertising campaign be accompanied by a grass roots local community engagement initiative that involves trusted consumers and community leaders convening local conversations with community groups through local networks such as regional community associations, sporting clubs etc to discuss the benefits of vaccination.

"CHF supports community organisations including ACOSS, FECCA and AFAO in urging the Government to exploit the value of working with the community to ensure the vaccination messages reaches all Australians," Ms Wells said.

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