



\$2 BILLION FEDERAL OMICRON AND FLU HEALTH BOOST MUST FOCUS ON UNDERPRIVILEGED

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The Federal Government's planned \$2 billion health funding boost to fight a looming winter omicron infection wave and the first serious flu season in three years must focus on disability, aged and Indigenous communities.

"Over the past two years, we have seen marginalised communities left behind or ignored by the Federal Government as it has rolled out vaccinations and other COVID related health resources," Ms Monique Earsman, Executive Director, Catholic Social Services Australia, said today.

"The Government can't allow this to happen again as a new omicron strain, more infectious than the original, is starting to take hold and infection numbers start to swell.

"On top of this, health experts are now warning of a major flu outbreak this winter that has been kept in check over the past three years by closed borders and lockdowns.

"Together, these health threats have the potential to run through vulnerable communities that were largely left to fend for themselves over the past two years.

"Despite attempts to increase vaccinations rates in Indigenous and disability communities, these groups still lag well behind the broader community.

"The Federal Government must place added emphasis on ensuring First Nation and people living with disabilities are fully vaccinated for both omicron and the flu ahead of a winter outbreak," Ms Earsman said.

NSW Health authorities on Thursday warned the new omicron version that is reportedly 25 per cent more transmissible than the first omicron variant would see cases double to about 30,000 a day by as early as next month.

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