



80 per cent vaccination shouldn't be a moment of pride as marginalised still waiting

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Despite more than 80 per cent of Australian residents aged over 16 have now being fully-vaccinated against COVID-19, people living with disabilities and first Nation Australians vaccination rates continue to lag well behind the rest of Australia.

Francis Sullivan, Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia said from day one, the vaccine rollout has been stacked against communities at risk.

“People living with disabilities and in the Indigenous community are still waiting for second vaccinations while the more affluent among us are lining up for a third shot,” Mr Sullivan said.

“It seems that the Morrison Government, in its rush to get 80 per cent of the country double dosed, just gave up on the marginalised.”

According to federal health department figures, as of 5 November, 79.6 per cent of participants on the NDIS had received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 70.4 per cent were fully vaccinated. The NDIS figures do not represent all people living with disabilities.

Vaccine coverage among First Nations communities is also well behind the national average.

Just 65.9 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia have received at least one dose, and 54 per cent are fully vaccinated

On top of the low vaccination rate, the increased movement of people around regional areas over the coming summer has generated real concerns and fear of infection for unvaccinated First Nations people.

“To say we should be celebrating the 80 per cent vaccination milestone is to completely ignore the plight of the less fortunate in our communities.

“No-one should have to live in fear of COVID 19 simple because they live with a disability or live in a remote community,” Mr Sullivan said.

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