Report highlights

What the report is about

The Australian Government led and implemented the Australian COVID-19 vaccine rollout, with the support of state and territory governments. As part of the Australian Government's vaccine rollout, NSW Health launched its vaccination program on 22 February 2021, with responsibility for distributing and administering COVID-19 vaccine stock provided by the Australian Government.

This audit examined the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 and focused on NSW Health's contribution to the Australian Government led vaccine roll out in four Local Health Districts (LHDs), in particular the administration of two doses of vaccine to people aged 16 and over.

What we found

On 16 October 2021, NSW Health, in partnership with the Australian Government's vaccination program, achieved its first objective to fully vaccinate 80% of people in NSW aged 16 and over. Demand for the vaccine reduced in December 2021, and NSW Health did not reach its target of 95% fully vaccinated for people aged 16 and over until June 2022.

Despite challenges such as uncertain supply and changes to clinical advice affecting vaccine eligibility, NSW Health's overall delivery of vaccination services was effective and efficient.

During the audit period, NSW Health implemented effective strategies to allocate vaccines and reduce wastage to optimise the number of vaccines available.

NSW Health implemented its own booking system after it identified that the Australian Government's system would not manage bookings. There were problems with NSW Health's interim vaccine booking system, and NSW Health fully resolved these issues by September 2021.

As at 19 October 2022, vaccination rates for Aboriginal people and culturally and linguistically diverse people remained below the 95% target.

What we recommended

By June 2023, NSW Health should conduct a comprehensive review of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and incorporate lessons learned into pandemic response plans.

Fast facts

1 in 3
eligible people aged 16 and over in New South Wales received two vaccine doses administered by NSW Health as at 12 December 2021

95%
of eligible people aged 16 and over in New South Wales received two vaccine doses by 21 June 2022, behind NSW Health's 2 November 2021 target

86%
of Aboriginal people aged 16 and over in New South Wales received two vaccine doses as at 19 October 2022

750,000 +
vaccine doses were administered in one week in August 2021, the peak of weekly doses administered in New South Wales

80%
of eligible people aged 16 and over in New South Wales received two vaccine doses as at 16 October 2021