

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Australian Government commits \$500m for COVID19 immunisation across the region**

Global Health Alliance Australia and Pacific Friends of Global Health welcome the announcement from the Australian Government of a \$500 million pledge to support the Pacific and South East Asia to safely and effectively roll out COVID19 immunisation programs over the next three years.

This commitment builds on an already unprecedented level of support to the region, with a \$305m package announced in the October budget to support the Pacific and Timor Leste's COVID recovery and support.

Professor Brendan Crabb AC, Chair of Pacific Friends of Global Health:

"COVID19 threatens to derail decades of progress in global health in our region. For some of our closest neighbours, like PNG, deaths from diseases like TB, HIV and malaria are increasing due to overwhelmed health systems and a diversion of resources away from routine programs towards the covid response. Helping our neighbours to recover from this pandemic is not only the right thing to do, but crucial to the prosperity and health security of our region. This pandemic isn't over until it's over for everyone."

Acting Executive Director of the Global Health Alliance Australia, Ms Mary Harney said:

"Your chance of receiving a timely vaccination against COVID19 shouldn't be dependent on where you live. A global pandemic requires a global response, and countries who may not be able to afford vaccines should not be left behind. Today's announcement provides hope and protection to vulnerable people and communities in our region and we should be proud of the Australian Government for stepping up in support during this time of crisis."

In September, the Australian Government signed on to participate in the COVAX Facility – a mechanism that pools the resources of high- and low-income nations to accelerate vaccine research and development and ensure equitable global distribution of a safe and effective vaccine. It also pledged \$80m to the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment to specifically support distribution in lower-income countries. COVAX is co-led by the World Health Organisation, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Earlier this week, the Parliamentary Friends of our Pacific Family group were briefed by the CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance Dr Seth Berkley on COVID19 vaccine prospects as part of the COVAX Facility.

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Professor Brendan Crabb AC is available for interviews.

## **ABOUT PACIFIC FRIENDS OF GLOBAL HEALTH**

[Pacific Friends of Global Health](#) (“Pacific Friends”) serves three of the world’s most significant global health organisations; the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#) (“the Global Fund”), [Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance](#) (“Gavi”) and [UNITAID](#). We promote a greater understanding of the three organisations and aim to mobilise political and financial support in the Pacific region. Our mission is to increase the profile of the three organisations, increase understanding of their distinct and complementary roles in the global health response, showcase synergies between the organisations, raise awareness of the global health issues in the context of the Pacific region and engage with key leaders and decision makers in the government, the media, private sector, academia, civil society organisations, including communities and foundations, in Australia and in due course, in New Zealand.

## **ABOUT GLOBAL HEALTH ALLIANCE AUSTRALIA**

Formed in 2016, [Global Health Alliance Australia](#) cultivates a comprehensive perspective of the regional global health ecosystem and identifies non-traditional partnerships that individual organisations and institutions often can’t do. These strategic connections impact over the long term to:

- provide a platform for the identification of new partnerships, joint ventures and professional relationships
- enhance the capability and capacity of Australian-based global health and development organisations through creative convergence and collaboration
- establish communities of practice across silos in global health
- profile Australia as the global health and sustainable development hub in our region
- build the capacity of the sector and drive sectoral reform and disruption
- support the Alliance as a credible and respected voice

Our approach to building more effective organisations and the capacity of the sector is aligned to a longer term vision for more equitable and improved global health outcomes – mirroring the goals of similar organisations such as the Washington Global Health Alliance while at the same time forging our own alliances to combat other areas in global health.