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**State Member of Parliament for
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Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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Suzanna Sheed calls for support with First Nations vaccinations

Independent Member for Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed called on the Health Minister Martin Foley to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders get vaccinated.

Ms Sheed used her question without notice to ask Minister Foley why the vaccination rates for Indigenous Australians had been inflated to more than double the actual amount.

“I was shocked to hear that our understanding of the vaccination rates of Victoria’s Indigenous population have been greatly inflated,” Ms Sheed said in parliament.

“We have seen the spread of COVID-19 across western New South Wales, and Victorians have been congratulating themselves on having such a high rate of vaccination among our Indigenous community.

“It has been reported that Commonwealth Government figures were grossly inflated. Their figures were revised to show less than half of what we believed was the case, with only 21,559 Indigenous people having received a first dose and only 12,209 being fully vaccinated.

Ms Sheed asked Mr Foley how vaccination figures could be so wrong and asked him what level of oversight the State Government had to ensure their accuracy in the future.

Ms Sheed told Mr Foley that she had spoken to Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation’s chief executive Jill Gallagher who was concerned about the vaccination rates among Indigenous communities in the Shepparton and Hume regions.

Ms Sheed asked the minister what steps the Victorian Government was taking now to ensure a rapid increase in vaccination rates of First Nations people in the Shepparton district and Victoria more broadly, noting that Indigenous communities were meant to be in the part 1a of the rollout.

Mr Foley explained how the Commonwealth Government error occurred and said the Victorian Government was working with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, of which Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative is a member.

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