

Australian Health Officials Reject 3rd COVID Booster for All Ages

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By The Defender Staff

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In a press conference today, Health Minister Mark Butler said the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (ATAGI) largely based its decision on evidence from a recent [COVID-19](#) wave in Singapore, where severe disease and death were rare among people who received at least two vaccine doses.

[Butler noted](#) that cases in Australia have risen 47% in the last week, but remain 85% below the previous peak in July. He added that “any reduction in transmission by adding a fifth dose to the system would, in their [ATAGI's] words, likely be minimal.”

ATAGI Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly supported the decision, stating the Singapore case suggested the current wave would peak quickly and then cases would drop off.

But according to [Dr. Robert W. Malone](#), Australian health officials failed to mention the extensive data demonstrating that recovery of unvaccinated patients following COVID-19 infection “confers superior, long-lasting protection from disease and death,” making it likely that those with “[natural immunity](#)” will also continue to be protected.

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Australian health officials also didn't address data showing that recipients of multiple mRNA COVID-19 booster vaccines account for the vast majority of hospitalizations and deaths associated with COVID-19 infections, Malone said.

Malone told [The Defender](#):

“A reasonable conclusion from all of this is that, despite widespread promotion of COVID fearporn by corporate media, the currently circulating Omicron variants are not a major public health threat based on recent data from Singapore’s experience with these variants, and the [side effect risks](#) of additional boosting overwhelmingly outweigh the disease risks of the currently circulating variants.”

Also today, ATAGI [approved the Pfizer bivalent vaccine](#) for use as an alternative to any existing mRNA COVID-19 vaccines for people ages 18 and up.

Does the recommendation indicate a shifting strategy?

Dr. Lucas de Toca, head of the federal Department of Health’s primary care response to COVID-19, [said in a Senate estimates hearing last week](#) that although ATAGI continues to review evidence and trends related to vaccine approval, the technical advisory group is focusing on increasing vaccine coverage among groups eligible for existing boosters.

ATAGI member Allen Cheng, Ph.D., also acknowledged that the [risk of myocarditis](#) and the lack of benefit from additional boosters meant that the recommended vaccine schedule for younger people is unlikely to change.

“Vaccinations are beneficial and protective even for younger people but the more doses you get the less benefit you derive from them and then we start to worry about causing side effects,” Cheng said.

In the hearing, Kelly recognized the existence of strong “hybrid immunity” from previous infection and vaccination. He emphasized that vulnerable people ought to seek out antivirals quickly if they test positive.

ATAGI members continued to recommend that vulnerable people be up-to-date on vaccinations.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia imposed some of the [most draconian restrictions](#) on its population.

The country does continue to invest heavily in building a global biosecurity apparatus. On Monday, Australia [pledged \\$50 million dollars](#) to the World Bank’s new global [Pandemic Fund](#).

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The Defender Staff

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