



## **COVID-19 VACCINATION REQUIREMENT FOR EVENTS**

### ***Position Paper***

Polio Australia is the national peak body representing people affected by polio and its late effects. Polio Australia's member organisations are the State Polio Networks, who interact directly with the polio community across Australia.

Polio is a viral disease that affects motor neurons in the spinal cord. Post-Polio Syndrome/Late Effects of Polio is a progressive condition that emerges years after infection with the polio virus.

### **Susceptibility to serious illness from COVID-19**

While there is no evidence to suggest that a history of polio on its own will render a person more susceptible to developing serious illness from COVID-19, many polio survivors in Australia are in a higher-risk category for COVID-19 due to older age.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the presence of chronic lung disease puts many people at a higher risk of serious illness.<sup>2</sup> While some polio survivors have chronic respiratory failure or dysfunction that relates to hypoventilation rather than lung damage, it could be reasonably assumed that they may also be at a higher risk of serious illness.

### **Requirement for full COVID-19 vaccination at in-person events**

With the intention of minimising the spread of this highly-infectious illness in the general population, and with particular reference to the increased risk of serious illness for many survivors of polio, it is the position of Polio Australia that all attendees of Polio Australia's in-person events must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. (Where there is a genuine medical exemption this will not be required, but confirmation of this exemption will be requested.) Such events may include Community Information Sessions, Clinical Practice Workshops, Seminars, Conferences and any other gatherings.

*Polio Australia cannot provide individual medical advice in relation to a person's risk of serious disease, or regarding their COVID-19 vaccination. All individuals should seek advice from their own general practitioners and medical specialists in relation to their particular history, current post-polio symptoms, co-morbidities and concerns.*

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<sup>1</sup>Australian Government Department of Health, 2021. Advice for people at risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/advice-for-people-at-risk-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

<sup>2</sup> ibid