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New Zealand to donate 250,000 courses of COVID-19 vaccines to Fiji

HON AUPITO WILLIAM SIO

Foreign Affairs | Health

New Zealand has offered, and Fiji has accepted, sufficient doses of AstraZeneca for 250,000 people

from New Zealand's domestic vaccine portfolio, New Zealand Associate Minister of Health and Foreign Affairs Aupito William Sio and Fiji Health and Medical Services Minister Ifereimi Waqainabete announced today.

"New Zealand and Fiji are working together closely to support Fiji with access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines at the earliest opportunity," the Ministers said.

Both Ministers stressed that there are still a number of steps to work through before the vaccines can be delivered. The vaccine still has to be approved by Medsafe before it can be used in New Zealand and donated to Fiji.

The Ministers met virtually last week to discuss New Zealand's offer, which also includes $2 million of Official Development Assistance to support Fiji's vaccine rollout.

"Fiji has worked hard to keep COVID-19 contained and New Zealand has been committed to supporting it in this," Minister Sio said.

"But this success has been hard won. Following recent community cases in both our countries, we see a vaccine as key to protecting our people from the virus, and for our economic and social recovery."

"Fiji has chosen to roll-out AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine following earlier deliveries through the COVAX AMC and from India, and we are delighted New Zealand has been able to support us to continue our campaign," Minister Waqainabete said.

"New Zealand is working hard to make that happen as soon as possible with a target of delivery for the third quarter of this year. Under New Zealand Health standards the AstraZeneca vaccine cannot be donated until it's approved by Medsafe," Minister Sio said.