



**CHRIS BOWEN MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR HEALTH
MEMBER FOR MCMAHON**

**DEAL OR NO DEAL: PM CAUGHT OUT ON VACCINE DEAL WITH
ASTRAZENECA**

The Government has spent today boasting that a deal has been done on a COVID-19 vaccine with AstraZeneca. There's one problem. There's no deal.

The Prime Minister's media release from this morning reads:

"The Oxford vaccine is one of the most advanced and promising in world, and under this deal we have secured early access for every Australian," the Prime Minister said.

"If this vaccine proves successful we will manufacture and supply vaccines straight away under our own steam and make it free for 25 million Australians."

But today AstraZeneca has said there is no agreement that has been signed, only a letter of intent, and they are yet to confirm Australia has the manufacturing capacity to produce the vaccine.

AstraZeneca has said today the letter of intent 'doesn't go into any detail about the costs or numbers or anything until we have an idea of what the manufacturing capacity is - that's a critical piece in the puzzle'. They have gone on to say, 'there is a letter of intent which is a good first step, the critical next step is to determine manufacturing capacity'.

Just as CSL, who are essential to Australia being able to domestically produce this vaccine, are yet to confirm that they are able to manufacture this vaccine.

Australia now has an agreement to reach an agreement.

While any progress is welcome, the fact of the matter is ten other countries already have signed advance supply agreements in place with AstraZeneca, including the US, UK, Japan, China, India, Brazil and Argentina.

Last week the Government admitted they were only just starting to think about Australia's capacity to manufacture vaccines locally, opening a formal EOI for information from local manufacturing suppliers.

But today Greg Hunt and Scott Morrison are claiming we will receive the vaccine with the fastest countries in the world and have the ability to manufacture any candidates' vaccine.

Already billions of vaccine doses have been snapped up around the globe in costed agreements.

It's time the Government admitted they are behind the eight ball and starting signing supply agreements for vaccines.

Australians can't be left behind on the path out of this pandemic.

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