

Vaccination rollout begins



NO WORRIES: Ron Tanner, 90, and Rita Nischwitz, 85, were all smiles after receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations yesterday. PHOTO: Kieren Tilly

VACCINATIONS against COVID-19 have started to roll out for priority groups in the Wangaratta district.

Under phase 1a of the vaccination program, locals including residents at Ryley Street's St Catherine's Hostel began receiving their jabs this week.

"It's a bit of relief and excitement at the same time," St Catherine's chief executive officer Adrian Johnstone said, as residents were rotated through the vaccination centre established in adjoining Delany Chapel yesterday. "This is the first step to-



wards life getting back to normality, and residents are happy that everything is being done to protect them as much as possible."

Among the 61 St Catherine's residents who received their COVID-19 vaccinations on Thursday were Ron Tanner and Rita Nischwitz.

Ron, who will turn 91 in June, said he had no hesitation in lining up for the needle.

"I'm happy to have it," he said.

"I can't understand the people who won't have it.

"Everyone here seems happy about it; I think the general talk among residents is that they're all for it.

"I remember when I was a boy, polio and tuberculosis were the thing, then we got injections and they were wiped out pretty well straight away.

"This is the next thing we need to do."

Rita, 85, said she had not been overly concerned about the COVID-19 pan-

demic, nor about having the vaccine to protect against it.

"It's just what we've got to do to get to the next stage," she said.

Mr Johnstone said 19 surplus doses of the Pfizer vaccine were left over from the vaccination of residents yesterday, and these were to be administered to St Catherine's staff members in the afternoon.

He said the balance of staff would be vaccinated at a later date, with St Catherine's residents set to receive their second vaccination on April 1.