



National Indigenous Immunisation: Message Stick Newsletter

Issue: February/March 2019



Congratulations to Samantha Williams

A proud Wiradjuri woman from Narrandera NSW.

The artwork below was commissioned in 2018 as part of NCIRS' rebranding, with the theme "Protect your Mob – Get vaccinated". The artwork will adorn a range of NCIRS communications materials including print and web-based media.

The artwork's design represents our communities in the centre, from our home to the wider community. The symbols around the circle represent the people, both men and women; this could be anyone from Mothers, Fathers, and Grandparents to young men and women. It is our responsibility to keep our mob healthy. We need to educate our younger generations and communities about the importance of immunisations and how they keep us protected.

The lines going out from the circle represent our journeys, jobs, relocation and impacts we have made along the way. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families may relocate from one community to another. We have mob all over, but no matter where we go the story is the same – we need to protect our mob – so the smaller circles represent herd immunity across our communities. Also the people that this has an impact on – our elders, our babies and our people who cannot be immunised



Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a common, sexually transmitted virus that can cause cancers and diseases in both females and males. Without vaccination, 90% of adults will have a HPV infection at some point in their life.

HPV vaccination is a safe and reliable way to protect young people from getting a range of HPV related cancers and diseases.

The vaccine is provided free to children aged approximately 12–13 through school-based immunisation programs.

Students eligible for a free vaccine will receive a consent form from their school. This consent form must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school before a vaccination is provided.

Individuals who did not receive the vaccine at school are eligible for two free catch up doses up to 19 years of age.

The Department of Health has developed the following communication resources to support uptake of the HPV vaccine:

Find out more about the HPV vaccine:

- [HPV vaccine - educational video for parents](#)
- [HPV vaccine - brochure for parents](#)
- [HPV vaccine - personal story video for parents](#)
- [HPV vaccine - animation video for students](#)
- [HPV vaccine - animation for Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander students](#)

Additional information is also available for health care providers:

- [Clinical advice fact sheet for providers](#)

Find out more about [human papillomavirus \(HPV\)](#) and the HPV vaccine provided through the [National Immunisation Program](#)



'Get the Facts' – Launch of Phase 3 of the Childhood Immunisation Education Campaign

Phase 3 of the Childhood Immunisation Education Campaign – Get the Facts (the Campaign) has launched to encourage Australian parents and carers to get their kids vaccinated.

Phase 3 of the Campaign focuses on addressing the importance of vaccinating on time and the protection provided by vaccination, as well as continuing to address concerns around vaccine safety.

While national and state vaccination rates are high (nationally over 94.6% for children at five years of age, there are still geographical areas with lower coverage and some children are receiving their vaccinations later than clinically recommended.

Skipping or delaying vaccinations puts children and those around them at risk of contracting serious diseases. It's important that children receive their vaccine on time, every time, for the best protection.

A range of communication resources have been developed and will be hosted on the Childhood Immunisation Education Campaign website [resource page](#) this includes a series of new videos:

- **Vaccination timing** [Get the facts - It's really important to vaccinate on time](#)
- **Vaccination safety and monitoring** [Get the facts - Dr Nigel Crawford explains how vaccines are tested and monitored for safety](#)
- **Vaccination in the community** [The Australian Government is vaccinating against more diseases than ever before](#)
- **Vaccination Protection** [Get the facts - Vaccines strengthen your child's immune system](#)

The 8-week campaign will reach parents through search, social and online channels. Materials such as posters and brochures have also been developed to support the campaign. To find out more visit the [get the facts about immunisation campaign site](#).



National immunisation coverage

We have reached the aspirational target of 95 per cent coverage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five year olds. We are getting closer for one year olds but still have some work to do for two year olds.

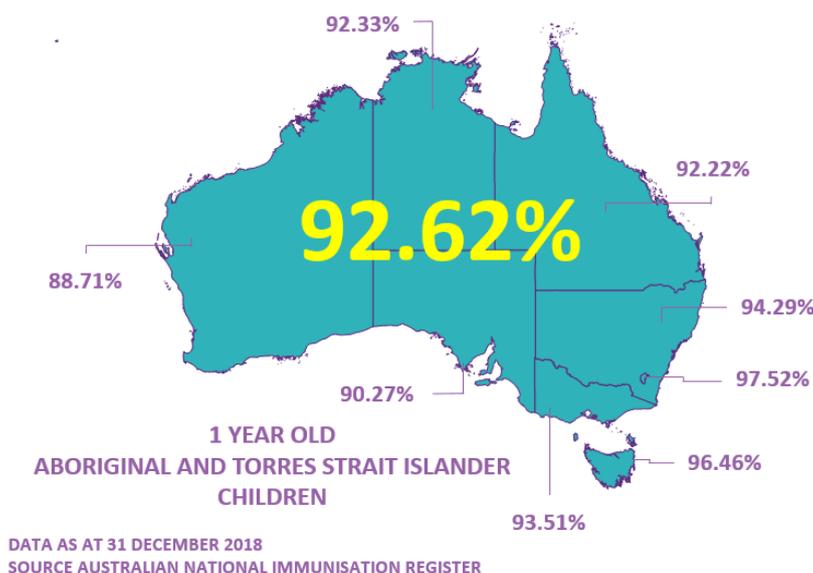
Immunisation coverage for one and five year olds has increased since 2007. We have reached the target of 95 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five year olds.

As at December 2018, the coverage rates were:

- 92.62% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander one year olds
- 88.20% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander two year olds
- 96.66% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five year olds

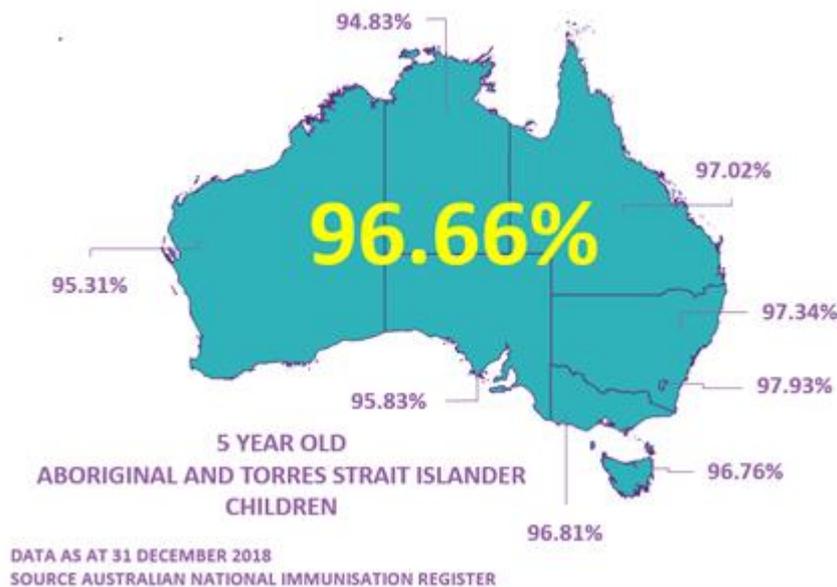
Coverage rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander one year olds

Four states and territories (ACT, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria) have coverage rates above the national rate.



Coverage rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 2 year olds

While coverage rates for two year olds are low compared to other age groups, this is because of recent changes to the immunisation schedule.



Coverage rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 5 year olds

Five states and territories (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, ACT and Tasmania) have coverage rates above the national rate.

Coverage rates for local areas can be quite different to the state or territory rates. To explore coverage in your local area, take a look at:

[Current data tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children](#)

Australian Government Department of Health National Immunisation Strategy for Australia 2019–2024

The Australian Government Department of Health has released the National Immunisation Strategy 2019-2024, which builds on the success of the previous 5-year strategy (2013–2018), and aims to expand and improve the National Immunisation Program.

The strategy is consistent with the World Health Organization’s Global Vaccine Action Plan. It is also consistent with Australian, state and territory government efforts to reform the health system by encouraging a greater focus on health rather than illness, and improving Australia’s preventive health system.

Its aim is to prevent disease and severe outcomes of disease by maximising immunisation coverage in people of all ages [Read full report here](#)

Yarning with Tanya Simpson

Tanya Simpson, a proud Wodi Wodi woman of the Dharawal nation, shares her journey in becoming a trained nurse and achieving incredible immunisation statistics in her role at her Public Health Unit – 100% coverage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in two age groups!

Tanya is the Aboriginal Immunisation Health Education Officer, Public Health Unit, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. She is currently on secondment at Shellharbour Hospital in Aboriginal Maternal, Infant and Child Health (AMICH).

Who do you think has influenced you?

My mum. Her strength and resilience...she's always been there for all of us. My grandmother and my aunties are really strong as well.

What was your first job in the health sector?

I started off working as an AMS receptionist. I was a community support worker, health worker and dental assistant. Working at the AMS really gave me a great opportunity to get back and connect with community, and just try and empower people to look after their own health.

How did your nurse training start?

I was fortunate enough to be offered a traineeship with NSW Health to do my nursing. The AMS gave me 12 months leave without pay to do that, on the provision that I passed.

I had some trying times on my first ward straight out of TAFE. The training was really hard. I was actually told to quit, that it would have been easier for me to quit. I was called in to see the supervisor and that was what she said, and I walked out in tears.

But I decided I wasn't going to do that. I wanted mum to be proud of me, and my family.

How do you feel about the work you've been doing at Shellharbour Hospital?

I was a bit scared and daunted at first, when I was first approached for the secondment. I haven't worked a lot with children, only through general practice. Everyone knows I'm an animal person, and newborn babies are so vulnerable!

But when you see those newborn babies and the impact that not having them vaccinated has on them, it makes you think, what I do is important and it does matter. When you see the immunisation coverage rates, it does make you feel proud. And to think that those stats are higher than the non-Aboriginal population!

What's your favourite part of the job?

Being out in community is a connection you feel. That face-to-face communication with people. Working in Aboriginal services with other Aboriginal staff, you can have that yarn to them and debrief.

We are very grateful to Tanya Simpson for sharing some of her story. She is humble, hardworking, loves her family and is dedicated to making a positive difference in her community. Thank you, Tanya!



Pictured L to R: Tamara Blanch, Tanya Simpson and Penny Matchett

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Acknowledgment and thanks to PHN South Eastern NSW for the good news story Yarning with Tanya Simpson.

1.National Immunisation Coverage Data (September 2018 Quarter),
<https://beta.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/childhood-immunisation-coverage>