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## **Access to immunisation a priority for a healthy population**

A comprehensive strategy is needed to allow all children and adults to have access to up to date vaccinations says Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) Vice President David Templeman.

This week celebrates World Immunisation Week hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) held from 24 – 30 April each year. This year's theme is *Close the immunisation gap – Immunisation for all throughout life*.

“Australia needs to focus on closing the immunisation gap so unnecessary sickness and death can be eradicated. Socio-economic pressures and remoteness affects the percentage of eligible people who are not immunised. A comprehensive approach needs to be put in place so these people do not miss out on vital medicine to protect them and their family,” said Mr Templeman.

Immunisation remains one of the best prevention methods in the world. Each year, two to three million lives are saved worldwide because of immunisation. Unfortunately due to socio-economic determinants, some people miss out and are put at risk of easily avoidable diseases.

As of March 2015, 91.0% of Australian children 12 – 15 months of age were considered fully vaccinated for age. Australia's national target is 95%. The Global Vaccine Action Plan 2011 – 2020 shows one in five children are not receiving a basic set of vaccinations during infancy.

“We all want the same thing – for everyone who can be vaccinated, to be vaccinated. One of the six strategic objectives in the plan is the benefits of immunisation are equitably extended to all people. Australia has a responsibility to reach these people and ensure equality in health service and delivery,” continued Mr Templeman.

“Government needs to look at the overall picture of the small percentage who can be immunised but are not. We need to address the barriers so the minority who cannot be vaccinated are not put at risk” stated Mr Templeman.

“As the election approaches, it is time for the Government to consider how to increase Australia's immunisation rates. If we can achieve a 95% immunisation rate for Australia, we can protect our children and population for the future,” concluded Mr Templeman.

The PHAA is hosting the 15<sup>th</sup> National Immunisation Conference in Brisbane where these issues will be discussed from 7 – 9 June 2016. Early bird registrations for the Conference close 29 April 2016. For more information visit the [website](#).

For more information view the [PHAA Immunisation policy here](#)

**For further information/comment:**

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