

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Immunisation catch-up plan a shot at better national health

Expanding the National Immunisation Program to include refugees and humanitarian entrants as well as provide catch-up vaccines for children aged up to 19 will improve Australia's overall health, nurse leaders say.

Australian College of Nursing (ACN) Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said the Federal Government's announcement would save many lives including those of children and babies.

"Immunisation is a safeguard against an array of nasty, yet preventable diseases such as whooping cough, chickenpox and meningococcal," Adjunct Professor Ward said.

"Immunisation is 100 per cent safe, quick, simple and effective, and is vital particularly at times like now when we are seeing a 50 per cent spike in the number of cases of whooping cough in South Australia compared to the same time last year."

Adjunct Professor Ward said patients with whooping cough could become very unwell, with babies at an elevated risk of dying from the disease.

According to the Turnbull Government, there are currently 467,000 Australian children and young people aged 10 to 19 who are not fully immunised.

Immunisations may have been missed due to sickness in childhood or because of a parent's or carer's attitudes towards immunisation.

Furthermore, more than 11,000 refugee and humanitarian entrants will be able to receive catch-up vaccines, as many of these entrants arrived in Australia as teenagers or adults.

ACN offers immunisation courses for nurses. To see the complete list of courses please visit our Education [page](#).

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For interviews contact ACN Executive Assistant Narelle Barrie on 02 6283 3459 or 0450 908 920

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