

MEDIA RELEASE

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Vaccinations fall behind after pandemic push

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is encouraging Australians to roll up their sleeves for “The Big Catch-Up” during World Immunisation Week (WIW).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people all over the world saw the benefits of vaccinations first hand as COVID-19 vaccinations proved to be lifesaving for some. While we all queued for the vaccines as soon as they were available, some of us missed getting other necessary vaccines.

World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, we experienced the biggest backslide in global immunisation in 30 years which has resulted in a worrying 40 per cent increase in the number of unvaccinated children.

ACN Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, said the decline in vaccinations will lead to an increase in vaccine preventable diseases in the future.

“Australia has run successful vaccination programs since 1932. It is one of our best tools in beating preventative diseases and is easily accessible through primary care facilities where nurses have been leading Australia’s immunisation programs from schools to councils to workplaces to aged care facilities for many years now.

“Immunisation is a safe and effective way to protect against communicable diseases and protect the community.

“We have seen several vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, rubella and diphtheria become rare illnesses in Australia as a result of our high immunisation rates, and almost saw the eradication of polio.

“According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in the 20 years since a vaccine was introduced, Australia experienced a one third reduction in preventable deaths due to the successful rollout of the vaccine to prevent the illness such as human papillomavirus (HPV), chickenpox, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcal disease, pneumococcal disease and rotavirus.

“Nurses play a significant role in vaccination programs across Australia and were instrumental in the COVID-19 vaccination roll out. Nurses have the knowledge to answer all questions including those from parents, as nurses understand the stress around vaccination-associated pain, and have a host of distraction techniques which can help those who really struggle with the thought of ‘needles’.

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“I encourage parents who have concerns over vaccines to reach out to primary health care teams and start a conversation about what is right for your family based on facts and medical history,” said Adjunct Professor Ward.

If you believe you or a family member has missed a vaccine, you can check the National Immunisation Schedule [here](#).

ACN offers immunisation courses for Nurses, Midwives, Pharmacists, Paramedics and Aboriginal Health Workers. If you would like to see the complete list of courses, please visit our [website](#).

For more information:

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Notes to Editors:

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurses and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva in collaboration with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF). An organisation not afraid to challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, ACN is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN's membership includes nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics, and researchers.

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CEO - Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN - Bio



Kylie Ward. Policy Reformer. Nurse. For-Purpose Leader. Equality Warrior. Adjunct Professor. Transformation Specialist.

Kylie is the CEO of Australian College of Nursing. She has led a program of transformation at ACN, which has now become Australia's beacon for Nurse Leadership.

She is a major policy influencer, advocate for women, children and equality.