North Coast NSW
Immunisation Action Plan

BACKGROUND

Immunisation is a national health priority and a shared priority for the Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts (the Local Health Districts) and the North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN).

The National Health Performance Authority report *Healthy Communities: Immunisation Rates for Children 2014-2015* reports immunisation coverage rates across Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and details the highest twenty and the lowest twenty Statistical Areas Level 3 (SA3s) of children fully immunised at one, two and five years. The report illustrates that immunisation coverage across the North Coast is variable, with immunisation rates within North Coast SA3s for all children at one year of age ranging from 92.6% to 83.0%, at two years of age from 92.0% to 79.7% and for children at five years of age from 94.6% to 79.5%. Rates of fully vaccinated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children also vary across the North Coast SA3s from 95.4% to 84.2% at one year of age, from 94.9% to 83.6% at two years and from 96.7% to 89.4% at five years. In Clarence and Port Macquarie SA3s the immunisation rates for all children and for Aboriginal children are above 90 per cent for all three age groups while in Richmond Valley-Coastal rates are 83 per cent at one year of age and below 80 per cent for two and five year olds. While immunisation rates for all children on the North Coast are showing slight improvement over time, it remains that the North Coast overall has the lowest immunisation rates in the country.

The North Coast Public Health Unit (NCPHU) (encompassing both Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) and Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD), North Coast Primary Health Network, Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS), General Practitioners and Northern Rivers Vaccination Supporters (NRVS) have been collaborating for some years to improve vaccination rates for children in the North Coast region and work together to:

- Devise local strategies to achieve State and National immunisation policy objectives
- Oversee the implementation and evaluation of immunisation strategies in the North Coast area
- Promote cooperative efforts by all vaccine providers
- Actively encourage immunisation uptake

NORTH COAST IMMUNISATION ACTION PLAN 2016-2018

This plan is the result of the work of an Immunisation Action Group (IAG) formed in 2014 to augment and strengthen the strategies already in place, and to:

- Improve workforce capability
- Increase community engagement in promoting immunisation
- Develop targeted strategies and approaches to improving vaccine coverage in individual communities

The plan was developed following a forum of key stakeholders which was convened in September 2015 to:

- Gather a range of perspectives and key learnings from work to date
- Develop a plan for a preferred regional approach
- Determine the best way to integrate and resource separate and collaborative practices

The participants identified the need to have a single collaborative approach to implementation with the key agencies clearly identifying which organisation will take the lead on each identified activity and which will be addressed collaboratively. As a result Immunisation North Coast (INC) has been established to continue joint efforts and ensure implementation of this plan.

The report illustrates that immunisation coverage across the North Coast is variable . . .

ACTION 1 Support immunisation providers to implement the 3Rs: "Report, Recall, Remind"

	LEAD AND SUPPORTING AGENCIES	PRIORITY Short term 0-6 Mths Med term 6-12 Mths Long Term 12 Mths	MEASURES
1.1 Service providers are supported to collect and maintain accurate data			
1.1.1 Better utilisation of Clinical Software Audits by immunisation providers in General Practices and Aboriginal Medical Services	NCPHN	Ongoing	Number of practices/AMS's conducting audits to identify and improve local immunisation rates
1.2 Build the capacity of practices to:			'Measuring for Improvement' immunisation topic developed and implemented by NCPHN
1.2.1 develop and maintain systems for identifying non completion of vaccination	NCPHN	Ongoing	
1.2.2 develop capacity for data cleaning and improving information accuracy	NCPHN	Med Term	
1.2.3 distribute clinical software usage education package and undertake periodic reviews to ensure it remains relevant	Taskforce	Short Term	
1.2.4 support staff in existing and new practices/organisations to use the clinical software usage education package	NCPHN	Short Term	
1.2.5 assist practices /AMS's to build on data systems to implement recall and reminder systems	General Practices /Aboriginal Medical Services	Med Term	
1.3 Use reports to review system effectiveness and identify gaps			
1.3.1 Develop capability within the PHN to utilise reports from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) when they become available in January 2016 1.3.2 Work collectively to develop strategies to address low coverage in targeted communities	NCPHN, NCPHU and AMSs	Med term	ACIR training delivered to NCPHN project officers and General Practice Support Officers Immunisation rates improve against baseline
1.4 Monitor rates of immunisation in disadvantaged groups to ensure coverage is maintained	NCPHU	Ongoing	

ACTION 2 Ensure the region is well supplied with health professionals skilled in providing effective immunisations

	LEAD AND SUPPORTING AGENCIES	PRIORITY Short term 0-6 Mths Med term 6-12 Mths Long Term 12 Mths	MEASURES
2.1 Increase the number of immunisation providers in the region			
2.1.1 Increase the number of Registered Nurses, Practice Nurses and Registered Midwives with Immunisation Authorisation through provision of scholarships and education sessions	NCPHU & NCPHN	Ongoing	Number of registered nurses authorised to immunise
2.1.2 Provide locally delivered immunisation updates for immunisation providers	NCPHU / NCPHN	Ongoing	Number of health professionals (by type) attending immunisation update and education sessions offered in the region
2.1.3 Provide information and education to General Practitioners to better equip them to encourage parents to immunise	NCPHN	Ongoing	Number of GPs attending education sessions with immunisation content
2.1.4 Provide education to relevant NCPHN staff delivering practice support. Aim for twice yearly education update on ACIR, Cold Chain and factors impacting general practice's/AMS's in relation to immunisation provision	NCPHU	Short Term	Number of new people being facilitated to obtain immunisation authorisation credential
2.2 Support Practices/AMS's in relation to immunisation provision. to develop viable business models to support increased focus on immunisation programs	NCPHN	Medium Term	Paper developed and evaluated for wider distribution in consultation with GP led Clinical Councils

ACTION 3 Increase visibility through engagement and communication

	LEAD AND SUPPORTING AGENCIES	PRIORITY Short term 0-6 Mths Med term 6-12 Mths Long Term 12 Mths	MEASURES
3.1 Develop a shared engagement and communication strategy that includes social networks and social media to increase positive visibility of vaccination in the region			
3.1.1 Include strategies directed at community champions and community and peer advocates such as parents, elders mentoring and social clubs	NCPHU & NRVS AMS's	Long Term	Shared communication and engagement strategy developed
3.1.2 Include strategies directed at alternate health practitioners, pharmacists, academics and students	NCPHN/NCPHU	Long Term	
3.1.3 Include strategies to engage stakeholders in low coverage areas		Long Term	
3.1.4 Build expertise and confidence to engage with hesitant parents for key stakeholders by providing training, including role-play	NCPHN/NCPHU NCPHU & NVRS & NCPHN	Long Term	
3.2 Develop and distribute resources for health professionals	NCPHN/ NCPHU	Ongoing	Tracking of utilisation of Immunisation Pathways on the Mid and North Coast HealthPathways site using Google Analytics
3.2.1 Develop systems to ensure that timely and accurate information about vaccine schedules is published on Mid and North Coast HealthPathways. NCPHN newsletters	NCPHN	Medium	
3.2.2 Encourage providers to use fact sheets developed by NCIRS, Immunise Australia and NSW Ministry of Health	NCPHU	Ongoing	Fact sheets published on relevant organisational websites
3.2.3 Promote availability of appropriate online training opportunities for health professionals	NCPHU	Medium	
3.3 Develop consistent positively framed messages for consumers			
3.3.1 Conduct an annual audit of consumer resources and web based resources to ensure that high quality, consistent resources are available to the community	NCPHU/AMS's	Long Term	Audit of consumer resources completed Audit of resources on NVRS completed
3.3.2 Select and share the best available education and training resources for use by all stakeholders	NCPHU/NCPHN /AMS's	Long Term	Agreed pack of consumer health literacy resources developed
3.4 Provide accessible 'Points of Truth' about vaccination			
3.4.1 Ensure health professionals know how to access the latest updates of Immunisation Handbook as the most accurate up to date information	NCPHU/NCPHN	Ongoing	Process for notifying revisions to HealthPathways developed and implemented
3.4.2 Provide reliable immunisation resources for health professionals through organisational websites including Mid and North Coast HealthPathways	NCPHN, NRVS & NCPHU	Long Term	
3.5 Support local research to develop evidence based approaches to improving immunisation rates	All	Ongoing	Number of research initiatives supported by agencies working on the action plan.

ACTION 4 Develop collaborative leadership arrangements

	LEAD AND SUPPORTING AGENCIES	PRIORITY Short term 0-6 Mths Med term 6-12 Mths Long Term 12 Mths	MEASURES
4.1 Develop and agree on one collaborative body to implement and monitor the work of the Action Plan		Short Term	Oversighting committee established
4.1.1 Immunisation Advisory group and Immunisation Taskforce to develop and agree on a new structure	Immunisation Advisory Group	Short-Term	
4.1.2 Formal terms of reference for governance structure(s) developed and membership established	IAG	Short Term	Success measures developed and agreed
4.2 Develop and agree on measures of success and a monitoring regime for the Action Plan	NCPHN/NCPHU /AMS's	Short Term	Reporting and monitoring process established
4.3 Develop a shared monitoring and reporting regime for Regional immunisation rates	NCPHN/NCPHU	Short Term	Shared monitoring and reporting regime for Regional immunisation rates developed