



Melissa Price MP

Federal Member for Durack

Local parents urged to join up for the jab

14th March 2016

Member for Durack Melissa Price has called on parents in Durack to join a national push to have their children immunised against preventable diseases.

Ms Price said families currently receiving the Child Care Benefit or Child Care Rebate have one week left to make sure their child's immunisations are on track by 18 March 2016, so they don't miss out on child care payments under the No Jab No Pay policy.

"In the Kimberley, over 98 per cent of our children have already been immunised, but with one of the areas in WA with the highest rates of vaccinations, there is still work we can do," Ms Price said.

"Following the announcement of the policy last year, the percentage of 12 to 15 month old fully-immunised children rose from 90.69 per cent in 2014 to 92.28 per cent by the end of 2015.

"Across the country the Turnbull Government has seen a sharp rise in the number of children being immunised against preventable diseases and in WA there are over 92 per cent of children who have been immunised.

"This is great news for those children and our community as more parents do the right thing, but nationally nearly 10 percent of children are still not immunised.

"The Government is aiming to increase the immunisation rate to at least 95 per cent to ensure Australia has 'herd immunity' for diseases like measles, whooping cough and chicken pox.

"Babies under six months are at the greatest risk of severe whooping cough disease and death. High vaccination rates help to protect our most vulnerable, including young babies and those unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons.

"Parents in our electorate who fail to fully immunise their child according to the National Immunisation Program are putting their child and our community at risk of infectious diseases."

Ms Price said that as part of the full immunisation package, the Turnbull Government committed a further \$26 million for a full range of measures, including incentive payments to GPs and other immunisation providers to help identify children in their practice who are overdue for vaccinations and to catch them up.

The overwhelming number of Australian families who have immunised their children before the March 18 deadline has put pressure on state and territories processing these records and this has caused slight delays. Some jurisdictions need extra time to add all the records into the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. This is a positive challenge to have. To protect families who have done the right thing and because the delay in records is beyond the control of parents, the Department of Human Services will continue to pay Child Care Benefit beyond that

date until the immunisation register is up to date.

Parents whose children are not vaccinated by 18 March (or a later date if previously notified by Centrelink), and do not have a valid medical exemption or are not on a catch-up schedule, will start incurring a debt for any child care payments they receive after that date. They will have to repay that debt.

Parents who do not intend to vaccinate their child can ask the Department of Human Services to stop their child care subsidies straight away, to avoid incurring a debt.

For more information about the changes to immunisation requirements:
humanservices.gov.au/immunisation

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