

Health and Community Services Committee

Public Health (Exclusion of Unvaccinated Children from Child Care) Amendment Bill 2013 Report No. 29

Government Response to Recommendation Directed to Government

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the Minister for Health consider implementing a well-planned, multifaceted and ongoing public education campaign about the benefits of childhood immunisation, particularly in localities where immunisation rates are low.

Government response: *Supported*

The Minister recognises the importance of communication about immunisation. Prior to the Bill's introduction, Queensland Health had commenced an ongoing public education campaign. Components of this campaign include a range of proactive and reactive media such as:

- social media (primarily Facebook and Twitter) which has generated significant conversation, with the majority of the conversation supportive of the Government position on immunisation;
- proactive print media (including articles in *Brisbane Child* and the *Courier-Mail*);
- significant reactive print media and television on specific issues such as measles;
- direct mail to parents of under-immunised children. This is done routinely and in response to specific issues (for example, a recent mailout about measles vaccination);
- print and online information and resources including brochures, fact sheets; and
- local immunisation promotion (for example, Bubba Jabs from North Queensland).

The Department of Health is currently developing a strategy for Queensland's Immunisation Program. Desired outcomes of the strategy are that families are well supported to make informed decisions about immunisation and are confident in the benefits that immunisation provides. One of the key elements of the strategy is promotional/educational campaigns on the benefits of immunisation.

Key messages about immunisation and the risks of not immunising will particularly target parents of under-immunised children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, whose vaccination coverage at 12 months of age is 5 per cent lower than the State average.

The campaign will also target regions/areas of low coverage and will be implemented across a range of settings, including early childhood and early learning centres and community organisations.