

Clinician alert: Immunisation rates falling in Cairns and Hinterland region

Key points:

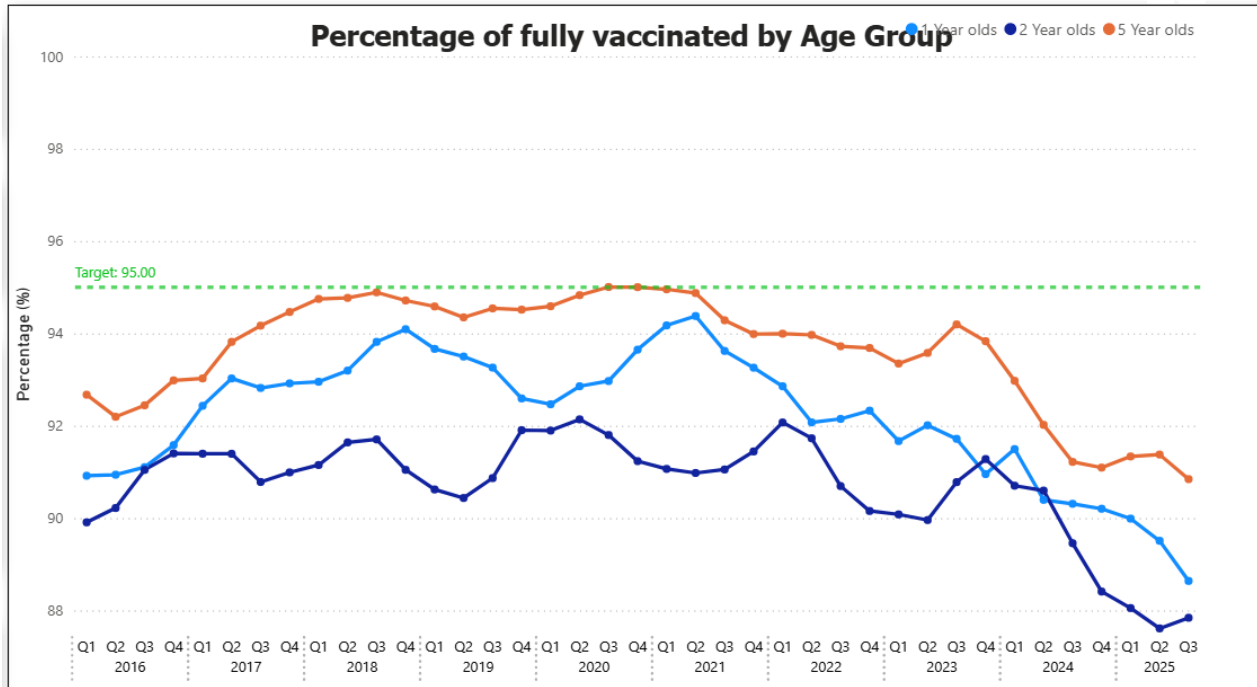
- The Cairns & Hinterland region has falling vaccination coverage rates, with the most recent data showing coverage of 89%, 88% and 91% at 1, 2 and 5 years old respectively.
- GPs and other health professionals remain the most important influence on parents' decision to immunise their children.
- Clinicians can play a key role through promoting immunisations during any interactions with parents, providing opportunities to access immunisations easily, and utilising recall systems and reminder messages where possible.

Background

Vaccine uptake is essential to achieve a protective threshold against outbreaks of highly infectious vaccine preventable diseases, such as measles, in the community. The Australian Government has a 95% vaccine coverage target for children aged under 5 years old in order to protect the Australian community.

Current situation

Immunisation coverage – Cairns and Hinterland Health Service. 1, 2 and 5 year olds.



Source: Australia Immunisation Register.

The graph demonstrates a rapid decline in on-time immunisation across all age groups since 2021. This is similarly reflected at a state and national level. The decline is due to a number of factors including access to vaccines, vaccine fatigue, reduced confidence in childhood immunisation, misinformation and competing parental demands.

GPs and other health professionals remain the key influence on childhood immunisation for parents. In a 2022 report, 50% of parents indicated that health professionals influenced them to vaccinate their children.

[Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation \(SKAI\)](#) provides evidence based information, training and resources to support healthcare professionals to have conversations with community members who have questions about vaccination. It also has [information for parents](#) about the recommended vaccines, and answers to questions about vaccine safety, common reactions, risks and benefits.

Clinical considerations

- Opportunistically promote timely childhood vaccinations during any patient or parent interaction.
- Provide opportunities to access vaccination during appointments where possible.
- Utilise reminder messages to encourage on time vaccination for patients where available.

Further information:

[Home | Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation | SKAI](#)

[Annual Report 2024–25](#)

[Community Attitude Research on Childhood Immunisation 2022](#)

Yours Sincerely,



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