



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Free HPV 'Catch Up' Vaccination Program a Success**

The free 'catch up' vaccination program for Human Papilloma virus (HPV) ends today for women aged 18 – 26 but will continue to provide free vaccines on an ongoing basis for 12 and 13 year old girls to be delivered through schools.

Medical advice confirms that the HPV vaccine is most effective when it is given before sexual activity begins and exposure to HPV occurs.

When the program commenced in July 2007, the Australian Government also funded the two year catch-up program.

The catch up program covered 13 to 18 year old girls, with vaccinations delivered through schools, as well as 18 to 26 year old women – who received vaccinations through general practice and community-based programs.

So far, 5.3 million doses of the HPV vaccine Gardasil have been distributed in Australia.

Catch up vaccination programs are always time limited and two years is considered a reasonable period in which eligible women could access the vaccine.

The preliminary coverage data for both the school programs and the catch up GP program indicate a very strong level of take up to date

Approximately 700 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed in Australia each year and over 200 women die from this disease. Globally, cervical cancer is the second most common women's cancer.

The HPV vaccine protects against HPV types 16 and 18 which cause 70 per cent of all cervical cancers in Australian women.

For further information about cervical cancer call 13 15 56 (for the cost of a local phone call) or about the National HPV Vaccination Program call 1800 671 811.

Alternatively, women should speak to their general practitioner or contact their local health centre, family planning or sexual health clinic or Aboriginal Medical Service.

**For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220.**