



**The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP**  
**Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Immunisation for better Indigenous health**

Health services have been encouraged to use innovative methods to ensure that communities receive vital vaccinations.

Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ken Wyatt, said mobile services were one solution to ensure that remote or isolated communities had access to immunisation against infectious diseases.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a significantly higher burden from infectious diseases – approximately four times that of non-Indigenous Australians,” Mr Wyatt said.

“The Australian Government is a strong supporter of immunisation and provides free vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including additional vaccines to address the higher burden of infectious diseases.

“We’re starting to see some good results in this area, but it’s vital that we try harder to reach communities which aren’t achieving the same good immunisation coverage.”

The main vaccine preventable diseases amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are influenza, pneumococcal and hepatitis B.

Nationally, immunisation coverage for one and two year old children is lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, but rising. The five year old vaccination coverage is 2 per cent higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children than all children.

At a ceremony in Rockingham, Mr Wyatt spoke of one of the winners of international vaccine company, Sanofi Pasteur’s, 2016 Vaxigrants program – Babbingur Mia Aboriginal Health Service in Western Australia.

Babbingur Mia Aboriginal Health Service, run by the South Coastal Women’s Health Service Association, will use the grant for a mobile bus vaccination service for two sites in Kwinana and Rockingham.

Vaxigrants of \$25,000 each are awarded to immunisation providers for innovative and sustainable vaccination projects. They enable doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers to implement specific vaccination programs to meet an identified need.

“These projects are positive examples of focussing on local needs and overcoming access problems in communities to achieve good health by taking the service to the people,” Mr Wyatt said.

The other 2016 Vaxigrants winners are Vaccin8@Work Pty Ltd in Victoria; the Gunbalanya Health Clinic – Top End Remote Health in the Northern Territory; and Robina Town Medical Centre and Gold Coast Primary Health Network in Queensland.

Mr Wyatt said immunisation was one of the key goals of the Implementation Plan of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023, which will guide national action to close the gap on health.

**For more information, contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 4707**