



Local Government and Immunisation: Strengthening Victoria's Vaccination Efforts

SUMMARY
Survey Report 2025



The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is the statutory peak body for local government in Victoria, representing all 79 municipalities within the state. As the peak body for the local government sector, the MAV offers councils a one-stop shop of services and support to help them serve their communities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

DISCLAIMER AND COPYRIGHT

This report has been prepared by the MAV based on survey responses provided by councils in September 2024. While this report aims to broadly reflect the views of local government in Victoria, it does not purport to reflect the exact views of individual councils.

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The MAV appreciates the time and effort councils invested in sharing insights about their immunisation programs. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to protecting the health and wellbeing of Victorian communities.

Immunisation: A Shared Responsibility

Immunisation is one of the most effective public health measures, protecting individuals and communities from preventable diseases. High coverage safeguards those vaccinated and contributes to herd immunity, protecting infants, older people, and those with compromised immune systems. Equitable access to vaccines is essential for strong public health outcomes across Victoria.

Councils play a central role in helping ensure that every child living or being educated in their community has access to vaccination, fulfilling their legislated responsibilities. Beyond this, councils deliver a wide range of programs for people of all ages, including school and early childhood clinics, community and adult immunisation sessions, outreach to vulnerable populations, and overseas catch-up programs. Their trusted local networks and deep knowledge of communities ensure that vaccines reach people who might otherwise miss out.

Most councils deliver programs directly, some contract services out while maintaining oversight, and others partner with neighbouring councils or health services. This flexibility allows councils to respond to local needs and maximise access.

Council run immunisation programs are a shared responsibility between the Commonwealth, state and local governments. Yet councils carry the greatest financial burden, contributing around 80% of program costs. This places an unsustainable burden on local government in a rate-capped environment. Without increased contributions from the State and Commonwealth Governments, councils may be forced to scale back or withdraw services, putting vaccination coverage and public health at risk.

A true partnership is essential. Equitable investment from State and Commonwealth Governments would enable councils to maintain and expand services, strengthen outreach, reduce inequities, and protect vulnerable populations. Sustaining council-run programs is critical to achieving the National Immunisation Strategy and Victoria's Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, ensuring that all Victorians have equitable access to life-saving vaccines.

In July 2024, the MAV surveyed all Victorian councils on their immunisation programs, funding, workforce, and demand. With a 96% response rate, the results highlight the significant contribution councils make, the pressures they face, and the opportunities for governments to support a sustainable, high-quality immunisation system.

Key Findings

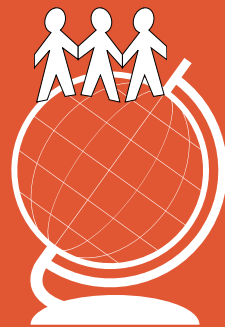
Program Delivery 2023



7,000+
community clinics held



430,000+
vaccines administered



94%
of councils provide
overseas catch-up
vaccinations

Avg 500+
catch-up vaccines
delivered each month



97,000+
children aged 0-5
vaccinated

218,000+
vaccines delivered to
children 0-5 years



69%
of councils provide
customised
immunisation
services to
vulnerable cohorts



1,400+
school sessions held



84,000+
students vaccinated



128,700+
student vaccines delivered

Key Findings

Funding and Resources 2023



Avg 80%

of program funding comes from council



Avg 20%

of program funding comes from the State and Commonwealth Governments



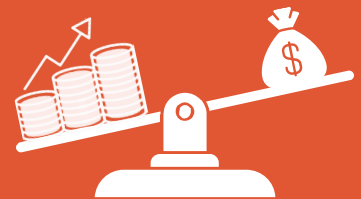
90%

of councils report delivery cost per person has increased in recent years



74%

of councils have increased their funding to meet growing costs



90%

of councils report external funding has not kept pace with cost increases



83%

of councils report current funding is inadequate to very inadequate



35%

of councils have reduced/scaled back services due to funding shortfalls



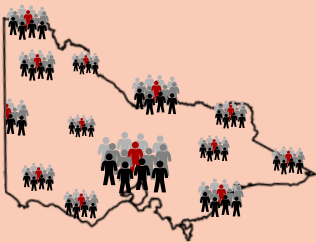
24%

of councils have ceased delivering some programs due to funding shortfalls

The Future is...

If the funding environment does not improve in the next five years, immunisation services across Victoria may look significantly different, with varying levels of access and different delivery models depending on resources and local capacity. Without sustainable external funding, councils may face difficult decisions about their immunisation services.

Without improvements, these pressures could result in:



Varying program delivery across the state



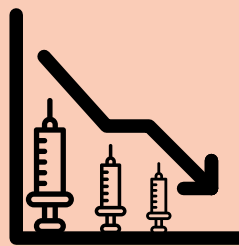
Contracting out of immunisation services



Unequal access to immunisation services



Reduction in outreach services



Decline in immunisation offerings over next 5 years



Potential decreases in vaccination rates

To ensure equitable access to immunisation across Victoria, it will be essential for councils to receive adequate and sustained funding, alongside a coordinated effort to address workforce and regional challenges. Without these supports, immunisation services risk becoming increasingly fragmented, with implications for coverage, community protection, and overall public health outcomes.

The Future Could Be...

Equitable investment in council immunisation services would enable the delivery of more flexible, accessible and responsive services that reach everyone who needs them. Councils could expand and enhance programs to meet community needs, close coverage gaps, and improve public health outcomes across Victoria.

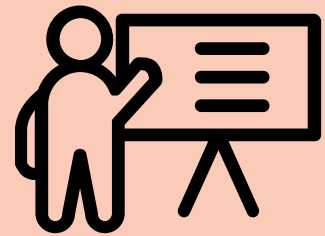
With the right funding, councils could:



Expand Outreach to Vulnerable Communities



Increase Access and Flexibility



Strengthen Education and Awareness



Build Stronger Partnerships



Invest in Workforce and Technology



Deliver Stronger Public Health Outcomes

Together, these measures would create a future where immunisation is easier to access, more equitable, and more effective - no matter where people live or what barriers they face. With the right investment now, councils can transform local immunisation services, protect more people from preventable disease, and build a stronger, healthier Victoria for generations to come.

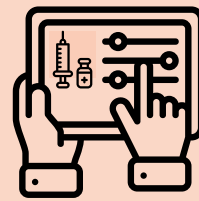
Recommendations

Councils play a central role in delivering immunisation programs across Victoria, particularly for vulnerable populations and in areas with limited access to GPs and pharmacies. To ensure these services remain strong, sustainable, and accessible, the MAV recommends the following actions:



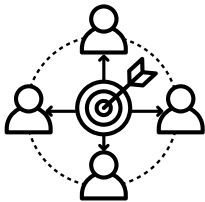
Increased NIP Funding

The Commonwealth and State Government should increase funding for NIP vaccines, enabling councils to meet rising demand and provide equitable access.



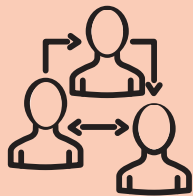
Free Access to Reporting Platforms

Free access to a vaccination booking and data-reporting platform should be re-instated to support accurate coverage tracking, evidence-based planning, and targeted service delivery.



Targeted Support for Vulnerable Groups and Overseas Catch-ups

State and Commonwealth Governments should contribute funding towards programs ensuring equitable access to vaccines for vulnerable populations, including newly arrived migrants, ensuring no community is left behind.



Stronger Collaboration

All levels of government should work together to align funding, share resources, and coordinate strategies, maximising the reach and effectiveness of immunisation services.



Investment in Workforce

The State Government should invest in workforce development to maintain a skilled and adaptable immunisation workforce.

Together We Can Build a Stronger, Healthier Future for All

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect our communities from preventable diseases. It safeguards the health of individuals, supports families, and builds strong, resilient communities.

Council run vaccination programs are central to this effort, ensuring that all Victorians, from young children to older adults, have access to life-saving immunisation services, no matter where they live or what their circumstances are.

The future of these services is at a critical juncture.

Councils currently carry the majority of the financial burden for delivering these immunisation programs, but this model is no longer sustainable. Without increased investment, councils may have to scale back, creating gaps in access, reducing coverage, and placing vulnerable populations at risk.

Our immunisation system is strongest when all levels of government work in partnership. When funding and support are equitably shared across State, Commonwealth, and local governments, councils can leverage their local knowledge and networks to expand outreach, reduce health inequities, and ensure no one is left behind.

Investing in council vaccination programs strengthens community care, protects vulnerable populations, prevents the spread of disease, and reduces pressure on our health care system.

It's time to re-establish a genuine partnership and invest in councils. Protecting every Victorian is a shared responsibility, and together we can build a safer, healthier, and fairer future for all.



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