

28 April 24

Needle we say more? Immunisation is a life-saver!

World Immunisation Week – 24 to 30 April

Rural and remote Australians are being urged to ensure they and their families are fully immunised and vaccinated – including when it comes to getting regular COVID boosters and the annual flu injection – to avoid serious illness.

“Whether it’s getting your latest COVID shot, this year’s flu injection or a first measles shot for your child, immunisation can be a life-saver,” **President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA), Dr RT Lewandowski, said during World Immunisation Week 2024.**



“The immunisations and booster shots given during childhood are crucial in ensuring our kids are protected against some really horrible diseases, both during their childhood and into their adult lives.

“Annual flu injections are also critical for many in helping to avoid serious cases of influenza, which for some can be life-threatening. With the Australian winter fast approaching, now is time to have your flu shot.

“And of course, during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, COVID vaccinations have been essential in preventing serious illness and death in millions of people.

“The World Health Organisation^a reports that immunisation has saved 3.5 to 5 million lives every year, and there are now vaccines to prevent more than 20 life-threatening diseases.

“While the vast majority of Australians ensure they and their children are fully vaccinated (the coverage rate for all children in Australia at five years is 93.93%)^b it would be great to get this up to 100% so we know every child in Australia is protected from a wide range of diseases.

“This is particularly important when you consider a disease like measles. Over 61 million doses^c of measles-containing vaccine were postponed or missed globally from 2020 to 2022 due to COVID-19 related delays, increasing the risk of bigger outbreaks around the world... and Australia is not immune.

“We urge all Australians to ensure immunisations are up-to-date for them, their children and also any elderly relatives, not only for the childhood immunisations that are so essential, but also for protection from COVID and the flu.”

(a) <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-immunization-week>

- (b) <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation/immunisation-data/childhood-immunisation-coverage>
 - (c) <https://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/measles/data/global-measles-outbreaks.html>
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A high resolution photo of Dr RT Lewandowski is [available here](#).

Available for interview:

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