



MEDIA RELEASE

World Immunisation Week (24–30 April): Spotlights prevention ahead of 2026/27 Federal Budget

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, 24 April 2026: As Australia marks [World Immunisation Week](#) (24–30 April), Pfizer Australia is urging the Federal Government to make prevention a Budget priority, warning that declining vaccination rates and slipping confidence in immunisation are leaving communities vulnerable as the country heads into winter.

With the Australian Government scheduled to deliver the Federal Budget on 12 May, Pfizer calls for a stronger national focus on prevention, including increased investment in preventative health and timely access to vaccine innovation.

Pfizer is also calling on the Australian Government to implement recommendations from its Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Policy and Methods Review, which identified the need to modernise HTA processes to keep pace with vaccine innovation. The Review recommended a tailored pathway for vaccines that provides faster and more predictable access through to the National Immunisation Program (NIP), alongside HTA approaches that better recognise the prevention and population-wide value of vaccines.

“Prevention should not be treated as an afterthought in our health system,” said Dr Krishan Thiru, Medical Director, Pfizer Australia and New Zealand. “The Government’s own HTA Review makes clear that if Australia wants to stay ahead of emerging health threats, we need modern, fit-for-purpose assessment pathways that properly value vaccines. That means faster, more predictable access through NIP, and decision-making frameworks that recognise the full prevention and population-wide benefits vaccines deliver for individual patients and for the sustainability of the entire health system.”

Pfizer is also calling for Government to embed prevention more consistently across health policy and funding decisions, by implementing targets for adult vaccination similar to childhood vaccination; new funding arrangements that link funding to uptake; and transparent reporting of vaccine uptake.

“If Government intends to ‘lift the speed limit’ of the economy then it needs to consider the productivity benefits of preventative health,” Dr Thiru said.

Preventative health measures deliver long-term health, productivity and economic benefits, yet it continues to account for only a small proportion of total health spending.

Modelling shows that for every \$1 invested in vaccination in Australia, more than \$3.50 in benefits are generated.¹

Despite these benefits, in 2020-21, Australia allocated just 3% of total health expenditure to public health and prevention, up from 2% in 2018-19.² This placed Australia 29 out of the 36 advanced economies for per capita expenditure on preventative health.³

Pfizer's [pre-budget submission](#) highlights the need for Government to act on the recommendation of the National Preventative Health Strategy and set a 5% minimum target for investment in preventative health by 2030.

“At a time of rising system pressure, growing demand and an ageing population, prioritising prevention is one of the most effective ways to reduce avoidable illness, protect hospital capacity and keep Australians well,” Dr Thiru said.

Vaccination remains one of the most effective public health interventions ever developed.⁴ In Australia, immunisation programs have dramatically reduced illness, hospitalisation and death from diseases such as measles, influenza and pneumococcal disease.^{5,6} Globally, vaccination is estimated to prevent four to five million deaths every year⁷ and has long been recognised as one of the most successful preventative health tools of all time, second only to clean water.⁸

However, recent trends are concerning. The latest national data show childhood vaccination coverage in Australia continues to decline. According to the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, on-time childhood vaccination remains substantially lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic, with delays becoming more pronounced in 2025. Two in five children received their first measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine late, while one in five received their second diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP) dose late. Coverage at key childhood milestones remains below the 95 per cent target needed to maintain strong community protection.⁹

These gaps matter. Measles cases have increased in Australia in recent years, driven largely by declining vaccination coverage and global outbreaks, despite the disease having previously been eliminated locally.¹⁰

Heading into winter, the risks are rising. Winter remains a peak period for respiratory infections, with seasonal surges placing pressure on hospitals and frontline health services. In 2025, Australia recorded more than 410,000 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases — the highest on record — while influenza vaccination rates stalled or declined across key age groups, including young children and older Australians.¹¹

Dr Thiru said World Immunisation Week is a timely reminder that prevention cannot be taken for granted.

“Falling vaccination rates are an early warning sign,” Dr Thiru said. “As we head into winter, maintaining strong and trusted immunisation programs is critical to protecting individuals, easing pressure on hospitals and supporting a resilient health system.”

World Immunisation Week provides a clear reminder that immunisation is a long-term investment in national resilience. Strengthening Australia's prevention framework, including immunisation, public confidence and timely access to vaccine innovation, will be essential to responding to seasonal and future infectious disease threats.

This content is intended to provide general educational information. Decisions about vaccination are made by healthcare professionals based on individual patient circumstances.

REFERENCES:

1. Evaluate. (2024). *Prevention: A productivity superpower: The economic value of adult vaccination in Australia* (commissioned by GSK Australia). GSK Australia.

https://au.gsk.com/media/0c5pjsco/2006133_economic-value-of-vaccines-report-2024_v51-002.pdf [au.gsk.com]

2. OECD iLibrary, 2024 'Health Expenditure on Primary Healthcare', Available: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/7a7afb35-en/1/3/7/7/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/7a7afb35-en&_csp_=6cf33e24b6584414b81774026d82a571&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book, Accessed April 2026.

3. Ibid.

4. World Health Organization. (2019). *Immunization*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/immunization>

5. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Immunisation and vaccination*. AIHW, 2024.

6. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *The burden of vaccine preventable diseases in Australia*. AIHW, 2019.

7. Immunization. WHO. Published December 5, 2019. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/immunization#:~:text=Immunization%20currently%20prevents%204%2D5,cost%2Deffective%20public%20health%20interventions>.

8. Oxford Vaccine Group. *The global value of vaccination*. University of Oxford, 2019.

9. National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance. (2026, April). *Annual immunisation coverage report 2025: Summary*. NCIRS. <https://ncirs.org.au/immunisation-coverage-data-and-reports/annual-immunisation-coverage-report-2025-summary>

10. Australian Centre for Disease Control. *Measles epidemiology in Australia, 2014–2024*. Communicable Diseases Intelligence, 2026.

11. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. (2025, October 20). *Australia posts record-breaking flu numbers as vaccination rates stall*. <https://www.racgp.org.au/gp-news/media-releases/2025-media-releases/october-2025/australia-posts-record-breaking-flu-numbers-as-vac>

About Pfizer: Breakthroughs That Change Patients' Lives®

At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to bring therapies to people that extend and significantly improve their lives. We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacture of health care products, including innovative medicines and vaccines. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as one of the world's premier innovative biopharmaceutical companies, we collaborate with health care providers, governments and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world. For more than 175 years, we have worked to make a difference for all who rely on us. We routinely post information that may be important to investors on our website at: www.Pfizer.com. To learn more, please visit us at: www.Pfizer.com and follow us on Twitter at @Pfizer and @Pfizer News, LinkedIn, YouTube and like us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/Pfizer](https://www.facebook.com/Pfizer).

Media Contacts:

Pfizer:

Pfizer Australia & New Zealand Media Relations:
mediaANZ@pfizer.com