

IMMUNISATION
C O A L I T I O N

Annual Report
2021

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Vision, Mission and Governance
3. Board of Directors
4. Scientific Advisory Committee
5. Staff
6. Our History
7. Annual Scientific Meeting
8. Adult Immunisation Forum
9. Round Table
 - a. Letter from Health Minister
10. Influenza Action Week
 - a. Summary
 - b. Flu Squad
 - c. Art Prize
11. Publications
 - a. Media Bulletin
 - b. White Paper
 - c. Guides for HCPs
 - d. Social Values Report
12. Audio Visual Production
 - a. Videos
 - b. Television - Ch31
13. Webinars
 - a. IC Annual Webinar Series
 - b. Webinars in collaboration with MdBriefcase
 - c. Webcast collaboration with HealthEd
 - d. Webinars with PraxHub
 - e. Advisory webinars
 - f. SAC Industry webinars
14. Consumer Surveys
15. Improving the IC website
 - a. Overview
 - b. Analytics
16. Podcasts
17. Digital Tool Development - CoRiCal
18. Social Media
19. General media
 - a. Overview
 - b. Press Releases issued in 2021
20. Acknowledgment of our supporters

1. Introduction

From the CEO



Mr Kim Sampson, CEO

The Immunisation Coalition is a company limited by guarantee, first incorporated in 2006 as the Influenza Specialist Group; 2 years later I became the very first employee. Now, almost 14 years later, we have matured into a very different organisation while firmly adhering to the principles it was built upon. Over that time we have grown from 1 staff member (0.6 EFT), to 8 full and part-time staff (4.2 EFT).

This is the first annual report we have created for public consumption. Our statutory obligations under the Corporations Act require that we generate a Directors report (and audited financial statements) for each of our financial years, which is peculiarly from November to October. We have instead opted for the calendar year, shining a light on 2021. It was tempting to report on a decade and more of activities leading up to now, but I think the founder and inaugural Chairman, Dr Alan Hampson OAM, provides a clear and succinct history in chapter 5 of the report.

The enormous output that we generate is only possible because of the staff we employ, to whom I am forever grateful. They are a wonderful team of skilled and dedicated individuals. I am also extremely fortunate to be working with such a marvelous Board of Directors. Chaired by Dr Rod Pearce AM, they are all highly regarded individuals, who give their time freely and willingly.

The last (but certainly not the least) group to acknowledge is the Scientific Advisory Committee chaired by Prof Robert Booy. They, along with members of the Board, are the people I go to when the media calls, or when I need a speaker to present at a particular meeting we are putting together or collaborating on. They are the people who have given us the reputation that we have earned over the many years of our existence.

It is with great pleasure and pride that I present this 2021 Annual Report.

2. Vision, Mission and Governance

Vision

The Immunisation Coalition will improve the protection of all Australians against infectious diseases through advocacy for immunisation.

Mission

To create public awareness regarding the importance of immunisation by providing educational materials and communication programs.

To co-operate with key Australian professional bodies, consumer advocacy groups and the Australian, State and Territory Governments in their educational activities focused on immunisation to bring information to Australian healthcare professionals and the public.

To work with consumers, health professionals and organisations with an interest in immunisation, ensuring that the information provided to consumers through our website and other communication channels is current, easily understood and scientifically informed.

Governance

Through its Board of Directors, the Immunisation Coalition is able to ensure full control over its activities and published materials. Sub committees have also been established to provide additional support. The governance of the Immunisation Coalition begins with its Board of Directors, and Dr Rodney Pearce AM as Chairman.

3. Board of Directors



Dr Rod Pearce AM
MBBS, FAMA, Immunisation Coalition Chairman

Rod Pearce is a practicing grass roots General Practitioner (GP) and policy adviser. He was President of *The Australian Medical Association (SA)* from 1998 to 2000, GP Nationally Elected Representative on the Federal AMA and Chair of the *AMA Council of General Practice* for 3 terms from 2004 to 2010.

In 2008 he was appointed by the then Health Minister, The Hon. Nicola Roxon, to the External Reference Group to develop *Australia's National Primary Health Care Strategy for the national health reforms*.

He is a member of the *Asia Pacific Alliance for the Control of Influenza (APACI)* and former *Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI)* member.

On Australia Day 2012 Dr Pearce was admitted to the Order of Australia (AM) for service to medicine as a general practitioner, through contributions to national medical organisations, and to education.



Prof Robert Booy
MBBS (Hons), MSc, MD, FRACP, FRCPC

Prof Robert Booy has been a Board member since 20 April 2012. He is Senior Professorial Fellow at the Children's Hospital Westmead School of Child and Adolescent Health.

He is a medical graduate of the University of Queensland (1984) and also trained in Paediatrics at the Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane.

Previously Professor/Head of Department of Child Health with the University of London (1999-2005), he was the recipient of a Wellcome training fellowship in epidemiology focusing on genetic factors important in meningococcal disease, and is also the recent recipient of an NHMRC Practitioner Fellowship.

Professor Booy's research interests extend from understanding risk factors for susceptibility to, and severity of, infectious diseases, especially influenza, and invasive disease caused by encapsulated organisms; the clinical, public-health, social and economic burden of these diseases (acutely and over the long-term) and means by which to prevent or control serious infections through vaccines, drugs and non-pharmaceutical measures.

He is recognised as an expert in the COVID and influenza fields, supervising many studies addressing the burden and prevention of respiratory viral disease in children and adults, in the UK, Australia and among Muslim pilgrims to Saudi Arabia.



Mr Jon Griffin
BEcon

Jon is a director of APL Financial Chartered Accountants and a member of Chartered Accountants Australia & NZ and has been advising not for profit organisations for the previous 20 years. Jon completed a Bachelor of Economics in 1978, a Diploma of Financial Services in 2006 a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in 2014. He is also a registered ASIC company auditor, registered tax agent and a registered self-managed superannuation auditor.

In a paid and unpaid capacity Jon consults, supports and audits over 30 not for profit and charitable organisations.

Jon's special interest is Social Value Accounting which looks to add to your traditional financial statements and provide a complete and accurate account of the value you provide in dollar terms. By taking the standard financial statements and adjusting those reports for social benefits, social costs and social responsibility and recognising the five pillars of capital per the International integrated Reporting Framework the financial statements show a more complete picture.



A/Prof Paul Griffin
MBBS, B.Sc. (Hons), FRACP, FRCPA, FACTM

Paul Griffin is an Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of Infectious Diseases at the University of Queensland and Mater Hospitals, South Brisbane, Australia.

He has fellowships in Infectious Diseases from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, in Clinical Microbiology from the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia and from the Australasian College of Tropical Medicine.

He is the Principal Investigator and Medical Director at Nucleus Network Brisbane; a specialised contract research organisation specialising in early and late phase trials predominantly in Infectious Diseases where he has been the Principal Investigator on over 125 clinical trials, predominantly vaccines.

Finally, as a Clinical Microbiologist, he maintains an active interest in diagnostic microbiology.



Prof Gary Grohmann
B.Sc. (Hons), PhD, FASM

Gary Grohmann was employed by the TGA in Canberra as the Director of Immunobiology (Vaccines), and Director of the WHO ERL, Office of Laboratories and Scientific services from 1997-2015. He is currently working as an independent consultant virologist, primarily working with the WHO in Geneva on a number of influenza related projects with the Immunisation, Vaccines and Biologicals group.

Previously, he has been on a number of WHO steering committees, including the committee for the review of the IVTM database on influenza viruses and reassortant influenza viruses, and the WHO

VCM committee that recommends virus strains for influenza vaccines (until 2015), and a member of the Technical Advisory Group (2007 – 2015) of the Global Action Plan (GAP) for Influenza – a strategy to reduce the present global shortage of influenza vaccines for seasonal epidemics and pandemic influenza in all countries of the world, especially developing countries. He also worked with the PIP Review Secretariat and as consultant on switching from seasonal to pandemic vaccine production (2015-17). In addition, he worked on the review of Biocontainment documents (2018).

His primary interests are in vaccines, vaccine regulation, medical and veterinary virology, and infectious diseases resulting from contaminated food and water as well as other environmental sources. He is currently a Director of Environmental Pathogens P/L and also an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Infectious Diseases and Immunology, University of Sydney.



Dr Leanne Jones
MBBS B Med Sc

Leanne Jones is a member of the Immunisation Coalition and joined the board in 2013. She has been a GP for over 30 years, currently practicing at Windmill Hill Medical in Launceston Tasmania.

For over 20 years Leanne has been involved in supporting GPs in vaccination working with GP Tasmania, Medicare Locals and more recently Primary Health Tasmania. She has been involved with Primary Health Tasmania in planning events and spoken at various education events for GPs, Practice Nurses and pharmacists, and has been on various state-wide committees and advisory boards in relation to vaccination.



Dr Ginni Mansberg
B.MED Grad Dip Journalism GAICD

A General Practitioner in Sydney's Sans Souci, Ginni has a special interest in women's health. She teaches at the Medical Faculty of the University of Notre Dame in the Discipline of General Practice.

Her other professional interest is in communications, with a Post Graduate Diploma of Journalism from University of Technology, Sydney. Ginni is the resident doctor on Channel 7's "Sunrise", as well as host of "Embarrassing Bodies Down Under" on the 9 Network and "Medicine or Myth" on SBS. She is the Co-host of the Podcast, "Things You Can't Talk About on TV."

She is the author of 5 books and is a wife and mum with a family of eight. She runs an advisory practice and is Co-Founder of cosmeceutical skincare company, ESK. She is also a Co-Founder and Director of the Asia Pacific HPV Coalition, Advisory Board member of the Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation, Advisory Board member of DropBio and Director of the Jodi Lee Foundation.



Prof Mary Louise-McLaws
PhD, MPH

Mary-Louise is a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Health Emergencies Program Experts Advisory Panel for Infection Prevention and Control Preparedness, Readiness and Response to COVID-19. For several years she was a short mission World Health Organization Advisor to China and Malaysia for surveillance development. She collaborated with Beijing to review the response to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak and healthcare worker safety for the Hong Kong SARS designated hospital. Mary-Louise provided advice for 9 years to the WHO Clean Care is Safer Care Challenge program. She was commissioned by the Commonwealth to review the Pandemic Influenza Infection Control Guidelines for evidence of protection for healthcare workers.



Dr Marita Walmsley
BSc (Hons), PhD, MBA

Marita Walmsley is an executive with the Victorian Government Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. Marita has had a career-long involvement in innovation, science and technology.

Originally a medical research scientist with expertise in molecular immunology, infectious diseases and autoimmunity, then as a director of a management consulting firm, Marita has provided commercialisation advice to Government, academia and the private sector.

More recently, in a range of senior and executive roles within Government, she has managed some of Victoria's larger science and technology programs and contributed widely to economic development policy initiatives. Marita holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) from the University of Melbourne, a PhD (Immunology) from Imperial College, London and an MBA from Melbourne Business School.

4. Scientific Advisory Committee

Prof Robert Booy (Chair)
Prof Lou Irving (Deputy Chair)
Dr Andrew Baird
Prof Allan Cripps AO
Dr Peter Eizenberg
A/Prof Paul Griffin
Prof Gary Grohmann

A/Prof Lance Jennings
A/Prof John Litt AM
Dr Deborah Mills
Dr Rod Pearce AM
Dr Kirsty Short
Prof Paul Van Bynder
A/Prof Michael Woodward AM

5. Staff



Kim Sampson
Chief Executive Officer

The management of the Immunisation Coalition is undertaken by our Chief Executive Officer, Mr Kim Sampson, who is also the Immunisation Coalition's Company Secretary.

He has more than 30 years experience as a finance & administration manager in medical and scientific research, public and private health, and community services. Kim joined the organisation in the inaugural role in August 2008.

Kim is also the Executive Director of **APACI (Asia-Pacific Alliance for the Control of Influenza)**, and is the President of the **Australia-Vietnam Friendship Society**.

Susanne Sperber (until 31 May 2021)



Head of Communications

Susanne joined the Immunisation Coalition at the start of October in 2011 and played an integral part in driving the organisation's public relations and communications activities until her departure from the company on 31 May 2021.



Jayne Geddes
Executive Assistant to the CEO

Jayne began her working career as a Medical Laboratory Technician including office management, specimen collection and laboratory work in haematology, biochemistry, and microbiology.

She has lived and worked in cross cultural and multilingual team environments and has developed good communication skills and a keen eye for detail and accuracy.

Jayne joined the Immunisation Coalition in 2015 and has extensive experience in business administration, events management, and website maintenance.



Johanna Hersey
Operations Manager

With many years in sales and customer service followed by a career change in Accounting and Business Administration Johanna offers to the Immunisation Coalition a perfect combination of skills for effective financial, social media and administration management.

Johanna prides herself on making every point of contact with her (it being written or verbal) an easy, efficient and enjoyable experience.



Suzi Blackburn
Event Manager

Suzi is the Event Manager at the Immunisation Coalition. She has run events such as national sporting events and training workshops. She also founded and runs *The Clan Jam* music festival.

In 1993 Suzi was nominated for Young Australian of the Year, for her contribution to grass roots gymnastics. She also won gold for Australia in international gymnastic competitions.

Suzi spent 17 years as an advanced paramedic with Ambulance Victoria. In her free time she enjoys painting, print making and illustrations.



Tessa Sampson
Medical Librarian

Tessa (BSc. Hons., M.A. Librarianship) has worked for over 30 years as a medical librarian and information specialist.

Prior to joining the Immunisation Coalition and APACI she has held senior positions at Baker Medical Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, SmithKline Beecham and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.



Silas Kidd
Digital Communications Manager

Silas is a designer, full stack web developer and an incredibly amateur basketball player. He is responsible for all the digital resources and campaign materials for the Immunisation Coalition.

Previous to joining the Immunisation Coalition, Silas worked on numerous election, advocacy and environmental campaigns.



Florence Tang
Digital Graphics Officer

Florence is the Digital Graphics Officer at the Immunisation Coalition. With a background in digital and graphic design across a range of industries, Florence specialises in creating graphics, assets and web designs to boost the Immunisation Coalition's online presence and promotional campaigns.

Recently, Florence coordinated the development of fundraising communications for UNICEF and the creation of educational social media tiles to improve awareness about vaccine preventable diseases.



Valerie Frattaroli
Medical Writer

Valerie is a medical writer at the Immunisation Coalition. She edits educational material for the website and for Health Professional Guides. She also designs slides for the webinars.

Valerie is passionate about improving health outcomes for the community. As a pharmacist she has supported patients to take their medications safely and appropriately. She has monitored oncology, psychiatric and metabolic clinical trials for Eli Lilly. She has been a medical facilitator for the National Prescribing Service to encourage safe, effective and appropriate prescribing of medications amongst health professionals.

She has promoted a heart failure resource for patients to help them better understand how to manage their heart failure for the Heart Foundation. She is currently part of the Western Health Renal Research team to help with Ethics submissions for clinical trials and has helped facilitate a clinical trial using e-technology to help GPs detect, prevent and treat kidney disease.

6. Our History

The Influenza Specialist Group (ISG)

The foundation of the Influenza Specialist Group (ISG) was prompted by alarmist media reports in 1990 which suggested that, based on outbreaks in North America, Australia was facing a severe influenza epidemic. As a consequence, there was a demand for influenza vaccination unparalleled since the 1969 Hong Kong pandemic, and vaccine supplies were quickly exhausted. This was followed by considerable adverse publicity particularly based on older adults and those in defined risk groups being unable to obtain 'life-saving' vaccine and that younger healthy adults had consumed the available supplies. Responsibility was variously attributed to all those in the supply chain - vaccine manufacturers, pharmacies through whom the vaccine was dispensed at that time and doctors who wrote the prescriptions. Governments and public health officials also came in for criticism.

In response, a consortium representing all of those stakeholders was convened to review the reasons for the shortage and to plan a way forward. The group included Alan Hampson, who had a long history of influenza vaccine development at CSL, one of the vaccine suppliers, and who had been allocated the task of interfacing with the media on behalf of CSL during the shortage.

The principal issues identified were the low annual influenza vaccine uptake in Australia over the previous two decades with annual production based on current demand, the long lead-time involved in vaccine production and inability to increase supply in response to sudden demand, a poor understanding of the impact of influenza and the benefits of vaccination among not only the Australian general public but also primary health carers and, it appeared, even those writing national vaccination guidelines. Consequently, there had been a failure to actively promote influenza vaccination in Australia even to older adults and others at high risk of severe infections.

The consortium agreed that a step to avoiding future shortages would be to increase vaccine supply by encouraging uptake in the 'at risk' groups from an existing low coverage rate and thereby provide an improved buffer against unexpected demand. An 'influenza awareness week' was planned, to be conducted in early 1992. Dr Brendan Nelson, then Vice-President of the Australian Medical Association (AMA), was designated to chair the event and a program of media briefings and lectures were arranged in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide under the auspices of the AMA. In the absence of strong influenza vaccination advocates in Australia, the consortium invited Professor Steven Mostow from the University of Colorado, who was often referred to as Dr Flu, to participate. In the following year the program was extended to include Brisbane, and Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand with the overseas influenza vaccination advocate Professor David Fedson from the University of Virginia, USA.



Alan Hampson OAM

Alan Hampson who had now moved to lead, as its Deputy Director, the newly designated WHO Collaborating Centre for Influenza in Melbourne, one of three such centres globally, increasingly assumed a leadership role in planning and executing annual influenza awareness programs conducted by the consortium. This became known as the Influenza Specialist Group with Alan as Chairman. Each year a meeting, comprising a developing group of local key opinion leaders together with stakeholders, was conducted to discuss advances in knowledge of influenza, its recent epidemiology and vaccination issues, and to develop key messages for the annual campaign. The use of international experts continued through to 1996 with a video-conferencing call to that

year's invitee during the annual meeting to ensure consistency of messaging. Emerging local key opinion leaders (KOLs) received media training during these meetings.

The annual awareness programs were supported financially by sponsoring companies involved in the supply of vaccines, and then antivirals, in Australia together with in-kind support provided via a PR company which delivered administrative and secretarial services for the annual meetings and awareness programs. From 1997 onwards the program was conducted solely using a now well-developed KOL network across the country. In 2006 the ISG was formally registered as a not-for-profit organisation with a Board of Directors. In 2008, an executive officer (Kim Sampson) was appointed and a physical registered office established.

Progressively the ISG appointed staff to bring all of its administrative and media PR functions in-house. The organisation has had a major impact on vaccine uptake and vaccination attitudes and has continued to operate with financial and in-kind support from a number of commercial sponsors from whom it operates at arms-length. In 2016, in order to bring its acquired expertise and success in influenza vaccination advocacy to bear on a wider range of vaccine preventable diseases, particularly those affecting adults, the organisation was rebranded as the Immunisation Coalition (IC).

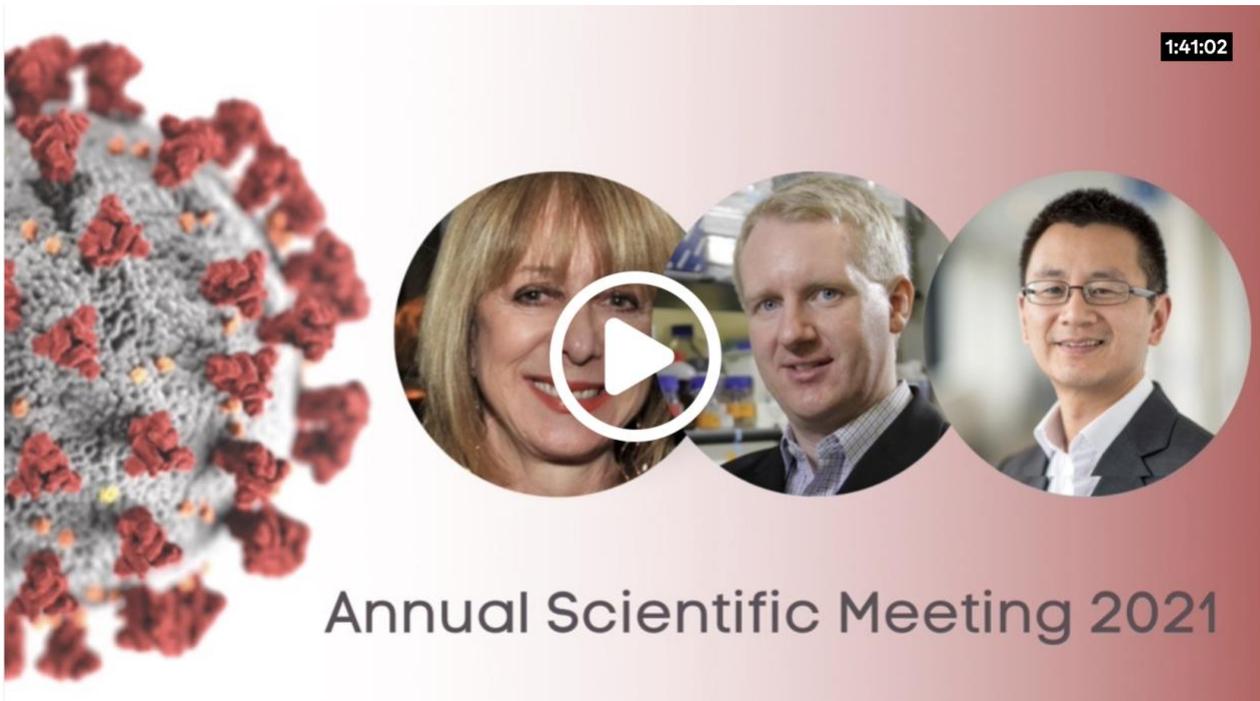
Immunisation Coalition (IC)

After 25 years at the helm, having overseen the transition from ISG to IC, Alan Hampson retired as chairman (and from the Board in 2018). In 2016, Prof Paul Van Bynder succeeded Alan as Chairman of the IC, broadening the organisation's remit and expanding HCP education. Paul remained in the role for 2 years and was followed by Prof Robert Booy. In 2020, Dr Rod Pearce AM became the 4th Chairman, and remains in the role today.

A very important appointment to the staff of the IC in October 2011 was Susanne Sperber. Susanne joined as a Communications Specialist, and stayed in that role for almost 10 years, finally moving on in May of 2021. She brought with her an expertise and understanding of the industry as a professional public relations consultant and communications expert from Europe and was the creative drive behind many of the IC's innovations. She was also responsible for the advent and development of the IC's social media program.

7. Annual Scientific Meeting

7- 8 February 2021



Sunday 7th February 2021	Monday 8th February 2021																												
<table border="1"> <caption>Professional Distribution - Sunday 7th February 2021</caption> <tr><th>Profession</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>Nurse</td><td>64%</td></tr> <tr><td>Other</td><td>12%</td></tr> <tr><td>Industry</td><td>8%</td></tr> <tr><td>Medical Specialist</td><td>5%</td></tr> <tr><td>Scientist</td><td>3%</td></tr> <tr><td>GP</td><td>8%</td></tr> </table>	Profession	Percentage	Nurse	64%	Other	12%	Industry	8%	Medical Specialist	5%	Scientist	3%	GP	8%	<table border="1"> <caption>Professional Distribution - Monday 8th February 2021</caption> <tr><th>Profession</th><th>Percentage</th></tr> <tr><td>Nurse</td><td>54%</td></tr> <tr><td>Other</td><td>19%</td></tr> <tr><td>Industry</td><td>8%</td></tr> <tr><td>Medical Specialist</td><td>9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Scientist</td><td>5%</td></tr> <tr><td>GP</td><td>6%</td></tr> </table>	Profession	Percentage	Nurse	54%	Other	19%	Industry	8%	Medical Specialist	9%	Scientist	5%	GP	6%
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Scientist	5%																												
GP	6%																												
Attendance 238 (registrations 447)	Attendance 209 (registrations 464)																												

[Event Feedback Report - Sunday](#)
[Event Feedback Report - Monday](#)

2021 ASM Program

Chaired by: Lou Irving & Margie Danchin

Topic	Speaker
Initial emergence and spread of COVID	Ben Cowling
Responses from around the world	Mary-Louise McLaws
Australian response	Allen Cheng
COVID vaccine overview	Paul Griffin
Treatment overview	Steve Tong
The role digital technology played in the pandemic	Rhema Vaithianathan
Modelling – to support decision making in uncertain times	Jodie McVernon
Defining risk groups	Kirsty Short
Aged care – the weakest link?	Michael Murray
Immunity to COVID-19	Katherine Kedzierska
COVID-19 in children –curiouser and curiouser	David Burgner
Challenges facing distribution of COVID vaccines	Paul Effler
Healthcare Worker Infections	Lou Irving
Diagnostic tests	Deborah Williamson
Differences in COVID & Flu	Bill Rawlinson
Flu Epidemiology	Ian Barr
New vaccines - Cell based vs Egg based	Gary Grohmann
Pneumococcal disease – Changes to NIP, COVID-19	Tony Korman

Attendees were asked about their preference of virtual meeting versus face to face.

- Sunday 5th February: Virtual = 67% F2F = 33%
- Monday 6th February: Virtual = 75% F2F = 25%

140 Youtube session views since the event

8. Adult Immunisation Forum

28 June 2021



2021 Adult Immunisation Forum

28 June 2021

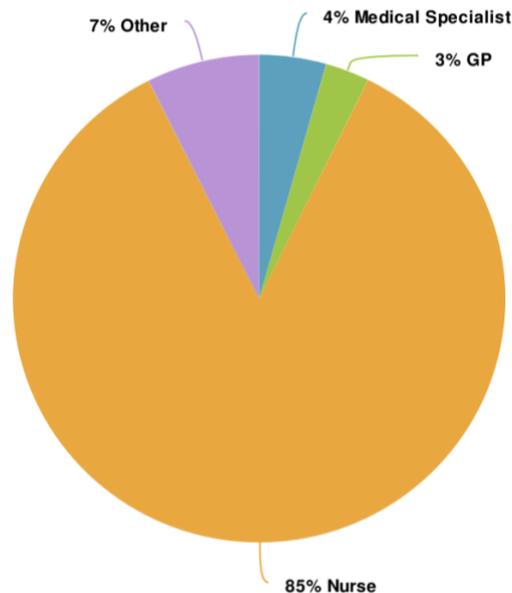


Prof. Robert Booy
Chair



Margie Danchin,
Co-Chair

Attendance 295 (registrations 502)



- [2021 AIF Attendee Event Feedback Report](#)
- 63 YouTube session views since the event

2021 AIF Program & Speakers

Chaired by: Robert Booy and Margie Danchin

Topic	Speaker
COVID-19 update	Dominic Dwyer
COVID vaccine – Community response	Jess Kaufman
Innovations in Vaccine Design	Paul Griffin
Nanopatch Technology	Robert Booy
Influenza VE in the Elderly	Stefan Gravenstein
Aged care update	Michael Murray
Herpes Zoster	Tony Cunningham
Meningococcal Disease in Australia	Robert Booy
Pneumococcal Disease	Tony Korman
Pertussis vaccine in over 50s	Mary-Louise McLaws
COVID-19 - The Indian Coal Face	Raja Dhar
Introduction to CoRiCal	Kirsty Short
White Paper - Improving VCR in adults	Rod Pearce & Jennifer Hertz
PneumoSmart vaccination tool	Angela Newbound
Needle Phobia	Corrie Ackland

9.Round Table

Messaging around Influenza Vaccination

In 2018 the IC held a series of round table discussions involving industry, GPs and pharmacists, with the purpose of improving messaging around influenza vaccination. There was very good intent, and positive steps forward, but we were unable to bring the Government to the table, and in the end the scourge of competing interests prevailed.

Fast forward to 2021 and we have held a new series of round table meetings, this time broadening the group, and successfully engaging with the Commonwealth Department of Health. The outcomes to date have been very positive, with a genuine enthusiasm for consistent messaging around influenza vaccination. The discussions are continuing through 2022.

In December of 2021, during a meeting organised by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Immunisation Coalition's CEO had the opportunity to speak with Health Minister, The Hon Greg Hunt MP, who expressed his appreciation of the work undertaken by the IC, and offered to express his thanks in writing. His letter is reproduced on the following page.



The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care

MC21-039854

Mr Kim Sampson
Chief Executive Officer
Immunisation Coalition
kim@immunisationcoalition.org.au

27 JAN 2022

Dear Mr Sampson

I refer to your correspondence of 2 December 2021 concerning our conversation at the Pharmacy Guild function at Old Parliament House on 1 December 2021.

I wanted to extend my sincere thanks to yourself, the Immunisation Coalition and its members for all the work you do to protect the health of Australians by advocating immunisation.

I am pleased that the Immunisation Coalition works collaboratively with like-minded organisations, including Primary Health Networks and other groups that fight vaccine hesitancy.

Ensuring everyone in Australia have access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations has been a top priority for the Australian Government this year and I hope that the Immunisation Coalition will continue to provide support including immunisation education to the Australian community.

Once again, please pass on my thanks to your members for all their work.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt

10. Influenza Action Week

26 - 30 April 2021

Summary of Event

The 2021 *Influenza Action Week* (IAW) is a national awareness week focused on highlighting the importance of influenza vaccination, especially in a pandemic world. Various activities for the general public, as well as healthcare professionals are hosted during this week. Due to the pandemic, some activities were limited to online awareness campaigns, while others were able to proceed, albeit under strict conditions.



In 2022, the name will be changed to “Immunisation Action Week”, to recognise the permanence of Covid-19, and to enable promotion of immunisation against all vaccine preventable diseases.

Key Activities in 2021:

- Free public influenza vaccination day on 30th April
Melbourne - 9am-5pm
Total vaccinations: 430
[Evaluation report](#)
Sydney - 7am-5pm
Total vaccinations: 343
[Evaluation report](#)
Perth cancelled due to sudden lock-down in WA)
- Launch of “Know the Facts, Fight the Flu” campaign with help from the “Flu Squad”:
[Fact Files](#)
- Announcement of Prize winners for the inaugural Art Prize Event. Online exhibition of winning submissions through social media channels and a Video Reel
- Art in Covid - Collaboration with William Kelly OAM to exhibit a video reel of the international “A shared step on a long Journey” Art Collaboration.

The FluSquad



Second year Monash University students, Yannee and Katya, are volunteering their services to the Immunisation Coalition as part of the FluSquad which was formed in 2021 with Katya, Yannee, and the IC. Having met the Coalition’s CEO during a virtual Hackathon in Singapore in 2020, the seeds for an influenza awareness week were germinated. Now the FluSquad is an integral part of the IC’s mission to deliver next year’s Immunisation Action Week. Their contribution is significant, helping to develop visual concepts, digital assets, and organising other medical and pharmacy students as volunteers for our free vaccination events. They do this with enormous enthusiasm

while fulfilling their obligations as dedicated students of pharmacy and medicine.

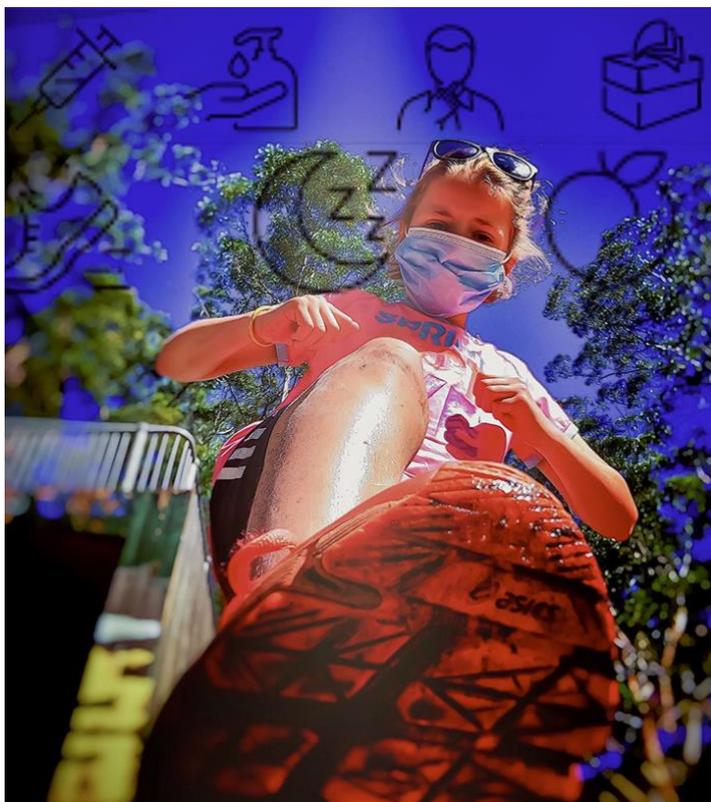
2021 Immunisation Coalition Art Prize

IMMUNISATION COALITION 2021 ART PRIZE

The Immunisation Coalition Art Prize is an annual event. It aimed to highlight and promote contemporary artists and support our mission to bring factual awareness of issues around influenza, vaccination and the burden of infectious disease. The selection panel consisted of representatives from the science and art industries and was spearheaded by Laureate Professor Peter Doherty.

The event received over 70 submissions from around the globe with winners from Hungary and Australia. Winning artworks can be viewed [here](#).

Information for the planned 2022 Immunisation Coalition Art Prize is [here](#). The event has already been launched with submissions opening Dec 1st, 2021. Winners will be announced in time for Immunisation Action Week 2022. The Art Prize will be promoted via education departments around Australia with an education package for teachers available to assist educators in linking the event to the Australian Primary and Secondary school curriculums.



Primary & Secondary Visual Arts Category First Prize
Winner
Sonya Clark - 12, NSW, Australia
'Stamp it Out'

11. Publications

Daily Media Bulletin

Published 5 times a week, the aim of the Bulletin is to inform recipients of the latest developments in the worldwide media about influenza (seasonal influenza, avian, pandemic), COVID-19, pertussis, pneumococcal disease, MERS-CoV, meningococcal disease, HPV, RSV as well as adult vaccination, immunisation and vaccination in general. It covers a wide range of topics including epidemiology, vaccines, antivirals, HCW vaccination, health policy, surveillance, special groups (HCPs, pregnant women, children, the elderly, those with chronic conditions), media, immunology, virology, industry, social research, vaccine hesitancy, anti vaxxers etc.

Number of items published per edition: 20-30

There are over 1,000 subscribers to this service.

Policy White Paper: Enhancing Adult Vaccination Coverage Rates in Australia

The white paper examines the challenges and barriers to achieving higher rates of vaccination among Australian adults eligible for the National Immunisation Program (NIP), identifies priority areas for action and suggests evidence-based strategies to improve vaccine coverage rates.

[View Policy White Paper](#)

Weekly Newsletter

There are now over 2,000 recipients of the weekly newsletter, which provides details of our current initiatives, and our upcoming events.



A banner for Unicef Australia's Fundraising Hub. It features a close-up photograph of a young child laughing joyfully. In the top left corner, there is a blue box with the Unicef logo and the text "unicef AUSTRALIA for every child". In the top right corner, it says "FUNDRAISING HUB". Below the photo, the text reads: "Last Chance to Donate!!! People in many high income countries are offered free COVID-19 vaccination by their governments. Some developed countries already have at least 50% of their people fully vaccinated; whereas the vaccine uptake in the 2/3 world (eg Asia, Pacific, Africa) of over 5 billion people is well under 5%."

Guides for Healthcare Professionals

Influenza

Includes timing of vaccination; vaccine composition for 2021; influenza & pregnancy; influenza & children; co-administration with other vaccines; COVID-19.

[Download Influenza Guide](#)

Pneumococcal Disease

Includes antibiotic resistance; transmission; clinical features; at risk; dosage/administration of vaccine; adult vaccine recommendations (NIP); pregnancy/breastfeeding; co-administration.

[Download Pneumococcal Disease Guide](#)

Pertussis

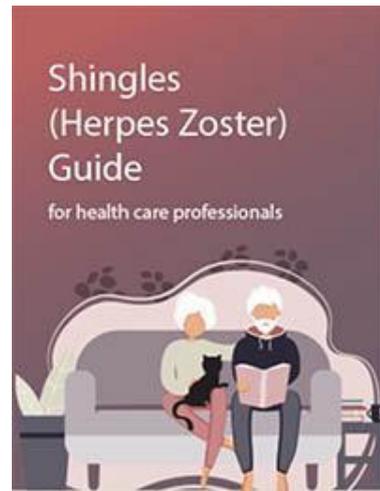
Includes cause/transmission; symptoms; complications; treatment; vaccination of pregnant women; infants; adults; encouragement for HCPs to recommend vaccination.

[Download Pertussis Guide](#)

Shingles (Herpes Zoster)

Includes vaccination; cause; features; complications; transmission; risk; prevention; vaccine safety.

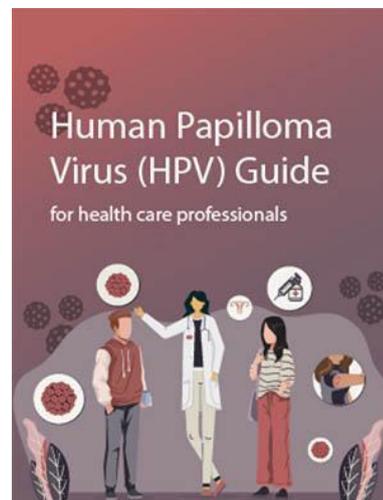
[Download Shingles Guide](#)



HPV

Includes cause; symptoms; transmission; prevention; vaccine efficacy and safety.

[Download HPV Guide](#)



Vaccination During Pregnancy

Includes whooping cough, influenza, and COVID-19 vaccination.

[Download Vaccination During Pregnancy Guide](#)



Other guides currently under review

- Meningococcal Disease
- Antiviral Treatments for Influenza
- Point of Care Testing

Social Values Report

Social return on investment is a principles-based method for measuring extra-financial value. It measures values that are not traditionally reflected in financial statements and is used to evaluate the impact on stakeholders.

The Immunisation Coalition analysed its activities in 2019 to produce a comprehensive valuation of its social impact on the community. The results showed that an investment of \$500,000 returned \$28,000,000 worth of value to the community.



[Download Social Values Report](#)

12. Audio Visual Productions

Video Productions

Pandemic Preparedness in Aged Care Facilities

The IC increased its video production in 2021, commencing the year with a video about Aged Care Pandemic Planning and Preparedness. The concept grew out of a study by Prof Robert Booy which was looking at the impact of rapid response to influenza outbreaks in residential aged care facilities. The study demonstrated that outbreaks were less frequent and less severe when the program was implemented. As the video shows, the concept can be applied to Covid or any other infectious diseases outbreak in residential facilities.



[Pandemic preparedness in Aged Care facilities](#)

COVID -19 Messaging - Videos

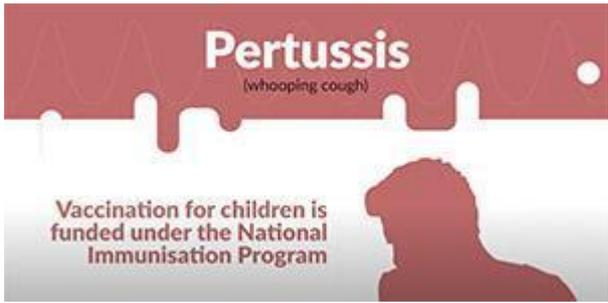
In August we began developing a series of videos addressing Covid vaccination uncertainty and hesitancy, aimed at supporting GPs and pharmacists. Most were in a format suitable for distribution on social media (30 seconds in duration).

<p>Dr Andrew Baird appearing in a series of 4 videos recorded in a professional studio:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why don't you want to get vaccinated?2. Why should you get vaccinated against Covid-19?3. What are the risks of Covid-19 vaccination?4. What are the common side-effects of Covid vaccination?	
<p>Using the Zoom format (a necessity during lockdown) we were able to produce a series of 25 short videos on the same topic, including some in Arabic.</p> <p>Dr Faeza Netfa appeared in several videos, speaking in Arabic so that we could help address the issues in south-western Sydney.</p> <p>Why should you get vaccinated?</p>	
<p>Prof Raina MacIntyre, a former IC Director and long standing member, addressed concerns around vaccination and pregnant women.</p> <p>What about pregnant women?</p>	
<p>Prof Robert Booy spoke about the implications of mixed scheduling of Covid vaccines.</p> <p>Mixed Schedule for Covid vaccination</p>	

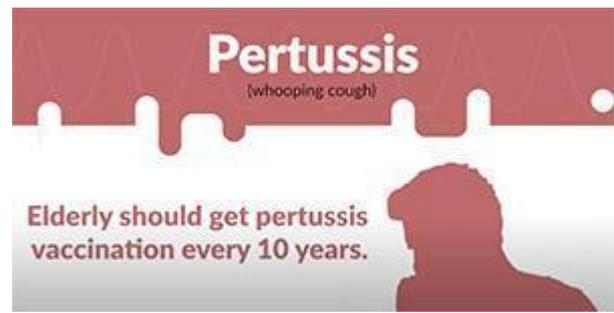
<p>Prof Paul Griffin presents the reasons why one should get vaccinated against Covid-19.</p> <p>Why should you get vaccinated?</p>	
<p>Dr Jessica Kaufman is joined by Dr Ginnie Mansberg, Dr Sarah Chu, and Prof Lisa Nissen, as part of a panel discussion on strategies to address</p> <p>Vaccine uncertainty and hesitancy.</p>	

Pertussis

After the success of the short Covid-19 videos, we developed a similar series for pertussis, again featuring Dr Andrew Baird.

<p>What is Pertussis?</p>	
<p>Pertussis vaccination is key for adults</p>	
<p>Pertussis vaccination is vital to protect vulnerable infants</p>	

[Pertussis vaccination protects our seniors](#)



Television

Ch31

20 June 2021: [It's Not a Cold, it's a Killer](#) - shown 50 times

12 September 2021: [COVID - What are the Risks?](#) - shown 36 times

13. Webinars

Immunisation Coalition Annual Webinar Series

Links for the following webinars will remain valid for a limited duration:

Influenza 2021

Presented by: Angela Newbound (Immunisation Nurse Educator)

Registrations 343 / Live Attendance 156

Post Event Youtube views 51

Meningococcal Disease 2021

Presented by: Angela Newbound (Immunisation Nurse Educator)

Registrations 207 / Live Attendance 110

Post Event Youtube views 83

Pneumococcal Disease 2021

Presented by: Angela Newbound (Immunisation Nurse Educator)

Registrations 537 / Live Attendance 278

Post Event Youtube views 278

Pertussis 2021

Presented by: Dr Andrew Baird and Professor Paul Van Buynder
RACGP accredited
Registrations 186 / Live Attendance 104
Post Event Youtube views 1,400

Shingles 2021

Presented by: Dr Andrew Baird and Professor Robert Booy
RACGP accredited
Registrations 263 / Live Attendance 134
Post Event Youtube views not yet available

Webinars and Training Courses in Collaboration with MDBriefcase

Practical ways to maintain flu coverage in the season of COVID

RACGP accredited 1-hour expert panel discussion.
Dr Rodney Pearce, AM - Chair
Dr Peter Eizenberg
Dr Leanne Jones
Dr Ginni Mansberg
Dr Sarah Chu

The vaccine landscape in 2021

RACGP accredited 1-hour expert panel discussion.
Dr Rodney Pearce, AM - Chair
Dr Kirsty Short
Dr Alan Leeb
Prof Mary-Louise McLaws
Prof Gary Grohmann

Reducing pneumococcal risk among older adults: the challenge in 2021

RACGP accredited 1-hour course, integrating video and case studies.
Faculty: A/Prof John Litt & Dr Rod Pearce, AM
161 participants, consisting of GPs, pharmacists, nurses, and specialists including anaesthetists, emergency medicine, neurology, ophthalmology, pathology, psychiatry, respiratory
Participation split: Rural 29%, Urban 71%.

Webcast collaboration with HealthEd

23 November 2021: Going Viral

The IC worked in conjunction with HealthEd to bring a free community service webcast. More information has emerged regarding theories about the origin of the virus. What is the likelihood of future waves/outbreaks, and what should we be doing about it?

Host: Dr David Lim

Presenter: Prof Dominic Dwyer

1,663 registrations

Immediately prior and after the presentation, one of our Pertussis videos was played to the audience.

Webinars in Collaboration with Praxhub

20 April 2021: Influenza in the time of COVID

Providing an update of influenza epidemiology and virology in the context of very low incidence rates that have occurred during the COVID 19 pandemic as a result of social distancing and quarantine measures.

RACGP accredited.

Dr Anita Munoz - Chair

Dr Sheena Sullivan

Prof Paul Griffin

27 April 2021: Addressing Flu Shot Hesitancy in 2021

A review of trends in vaccine attitudes, hesitancy and refusal that have emerged following the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid development of COVID-19 vaccines, and a very low incidence influenza season during 2020.

RACGP accredited.

Dr Anita Munoz - Chair

Dr Margie Danchin

Prof Paul Van Buynder

Advisory Webinar for Police Association of South Australia (PASA)

27 October 2021: Pre-recorded presentation delivered to PASA

In October 2021, we were approached by the PASA to provide information and advice to its membership about COVID vaccination, in the lead up to mandating of COVID vaccination for SA police officers.

Mr Kim Sampson - Chair

Dr Rod Pearce

Prof Paul Griffin

4 November 2021: Q&A - an opportunity for members of PASA to ask questions to an expert panel

Mr Kim Sampson - Chair

Dr Rod Pearce

Prof Paul Griffin

Dr Tom Aechtner

Scientific Advisory Committee Closed Webinar Series

Australian Vaccine Manufacturing (Seqirus) January 2021

Presented by:

Dr Jonathan Anderson - Head of Medical Affairs Asia Pacific

Moderated by Prof Gary Grohmann

Registrations 45 / Live Attendance 42

Therapeutics in development for COVID-19 (GSK) February 2021

Presented by:

Co Luu & Krystal Evans

Moderated by Prof Robert Booy

Registrations 15 / Attendees 10

Vaccine Development Update (Janssen) May 2021

An update to recent outcome from the ENSEMBLE trial and future respiratory IDV pipeline

Presented by:

Dr Tom Huang – ANZ Senior Medical Advisor (IDV)

Dr Darrin Gilchrist – ANZ Medical Director (Neuroscience, IDV & Operations)

Moderated by Prof Robert Booy

Registrations 12 / Attendees 8

Update on COVID-19 Vaccine (Sanofi) June 2021

Presented by:

Iris Depaz - Head of Medical Sanofi Pasteur ANZ

Desiree Anthony - Vaccines Medical Science Liaison

Claire Wilson - Vaccines Medical Manager

Moderated by Prof Robert Booy

Registrations 12 / Attendees 8

COVID Therapeutics Update (GSK) August 2021

Presented by:

Dr Krystal Evans

Moderated by Prof Robert Booy

Registrations 12 / Attendees 10

Vaccine Update (Pfizer) September 2021

Presented by:

Dr Yuen Lai

Dr Scott Willimas

Moderated by Prof Robert Booy

Registrations 16 / Attendees 12

Influenza Vaccine Update (Seqirus) December 2021

Presented by:

Dr Jonathan Anderson

Moderated by Prof Paul Van Buynder

Registrations 12 / Attendees 8

14. Consumer Surveys

Influenza Vaccination April 2021

Attitudes and intentions about influenza and COVID vaccination in Australia.

[Download survey](#)

Australians & Vaccination June 2021

Attitudes towards influenza, pertussis, and COVID-19 vaccines.

[Download survey](#)

Australians & Immunisation

July-August 2021

Knowledge about adult vaccinations.

[Download survey](#)

Influenza, Shingles and Covid

September 2021

Current attitudes to these diseases and vaccines.

[Download survey](#)

Pharmacies & Covid Vaccination

November 2021

Issues for pharmacists around Covid vaccination.

[Download survey](#)

Covid and Pregnancy

December 2021

Perceptions and attitudes towards Covid and Covid vaccination before, during, and after pregnancy.

Survey will be published in February 2022.

15. Improvements - Immunisation Coalition Website

Overview

In early 2021 the Immunisation Coalition website went through a major rebuild to make it easier for users to navigate, make it faster, and to ensure SEO best practice. This is an ongoing process as we learn more about how our users interact with the website.

The redesign and redevelopment also meant a review of the site's content, which will continue into the future. The next steps are to find suitable images and develop infographics to improve the look and feel of the pages.

The following pages of the IC website were updated during the year:

[COVID-19](#)

[Influenza](#)

[Pertussis](#)

[Pneumococcal Disease](#)

[Meningococcal Disease](#)

[Shingles](#)

[Vaccination During Pregnancy](#)

[HPV](#)

Website Analytics

Top Pages

Page	Pageviews
Influenza Statistics	60,601
CoRiCal	45,045
PneumoSmart Vaccination Tool	41,808
Flu Test	21,023
Home Page	20,291
Influenza Diseases (Consumer Page)	17,551

16. Podcast Series for HCPs

Vax Chat Australia - 6 Episodes

Presenter: Susan Pearce

Guests:

- Dr Rod Pearce
- Professor Gary Grohmann
- Associate Professor Paul Griffin
- Professor Mary-Louise McLaws
- Professor Ian Barr
- Dr Caroline Foreman

Episode one: Administration of COVID-19 vaccines (15 March 2021)

Welcome to the first episode of Vax Chat Australia, a podcast hosted by the Immunisation Coalition to provide information for GPs and other vaccine providers addressing critical issues about administration of COVID-19 vaccines during the coming months. Many of us on the frontline are facing a myriad of questions from patients. Vax Chat Australia will provide information and sources to answer these questions about the various and changing COVID-19 vaccines.

Episode two: COVID-19 Vaccines- Patient questions (29 March 2021)

Many GPs are now able to give the AstraZeneca Vaccine to their patients (and others) who meet the 1b criteria and both those who have and have not yet started are facing a deluge of questions and calls about it. Vax Chat Australia will provide information and sources to answer both your and your patient's current questions about the COVID-19 vaccines. We still have only the two vaccines available in Australia, the AZ and Pfizer and there is a lot of talk about the various side effects and efficacy of the two but the big news story in the last weeks is the halt of the AstraZeneca vaccine while there is an investigation into reported incidence of blood clots.

Episode three: Vaccine rollout with Dr Paul Griffin (12 April 2021)

Dr Paul Griffin, an Infectious Diseases Physician and Microbiologist, Mater Director of Infectious Diseases Associate Professor discussed the vaccine roll out with hosts Susan Pearce and GP Dr Rod Pearce. More and more General Practitioners will have commenced their COVID vaccination roll out and states are preparing to open local mass vaccination clinics to support the existing commonwealth vaccination clinics. At the time of recording, more than 800,000 people in Australia have been vaccinated and daily numbers are increasing.

Episode four: Vaccines eligibility with Dr Caroline Foreman (26 April 2021)

Dr Caroline Foreman, a clinical immunologist, and Chief Doctor at the Australian Medic Alert Foundation, discussed the vaccination roll out with hosts Susan Pearce and GP Dr Rod Pearce. As always seems to be the case with COVID it has been a rollercoaster few weeks! Our entire vaccination rollout has been rethought with all those over 50 being eligible to receive the AZ vaccine from May 3rd and at GPs from May 17th.

Episode five: India's Covid-19 crisis with Professor Ian Bar (10 May 2021)

Professor Ian Barr joins Susan Pearce and Dr Rodney Pearce to discuss India's exploding COVID-19 rate and the ban Australia has put on flights from India due to the dramatic rise in international travellers with COVID-19.

Episode six: Prevention and new hope with Professor Mary-Louise McLaws (24 May 2021)

Professor Mary-Louise McLaws is an epidemiologist with expertise in hospital infection and infectious diseases control. Her COVID-19 related activities include: member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Health Emergencies Program Experts Advisory Panel for Infection Prevention and Control Preparedness, Readiness and Response to COVID-19 and member of the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission COVID Infection Prevention and Control taskforce. She is the Focal Point for the WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) in the School of Population Health.

17. Digital Tool Development

After the enormous success of the PneumoSmart Vaccination Tool (PVT), having been updated in 2020, we began working on a Covid Vaccination Risk Calculator - "CoRiCal". A static beta version was developed for circulation amongst GPs to gather feedback prior to the release of the fully interactive version, which is now [available on the IC website](#).



18. Social Media

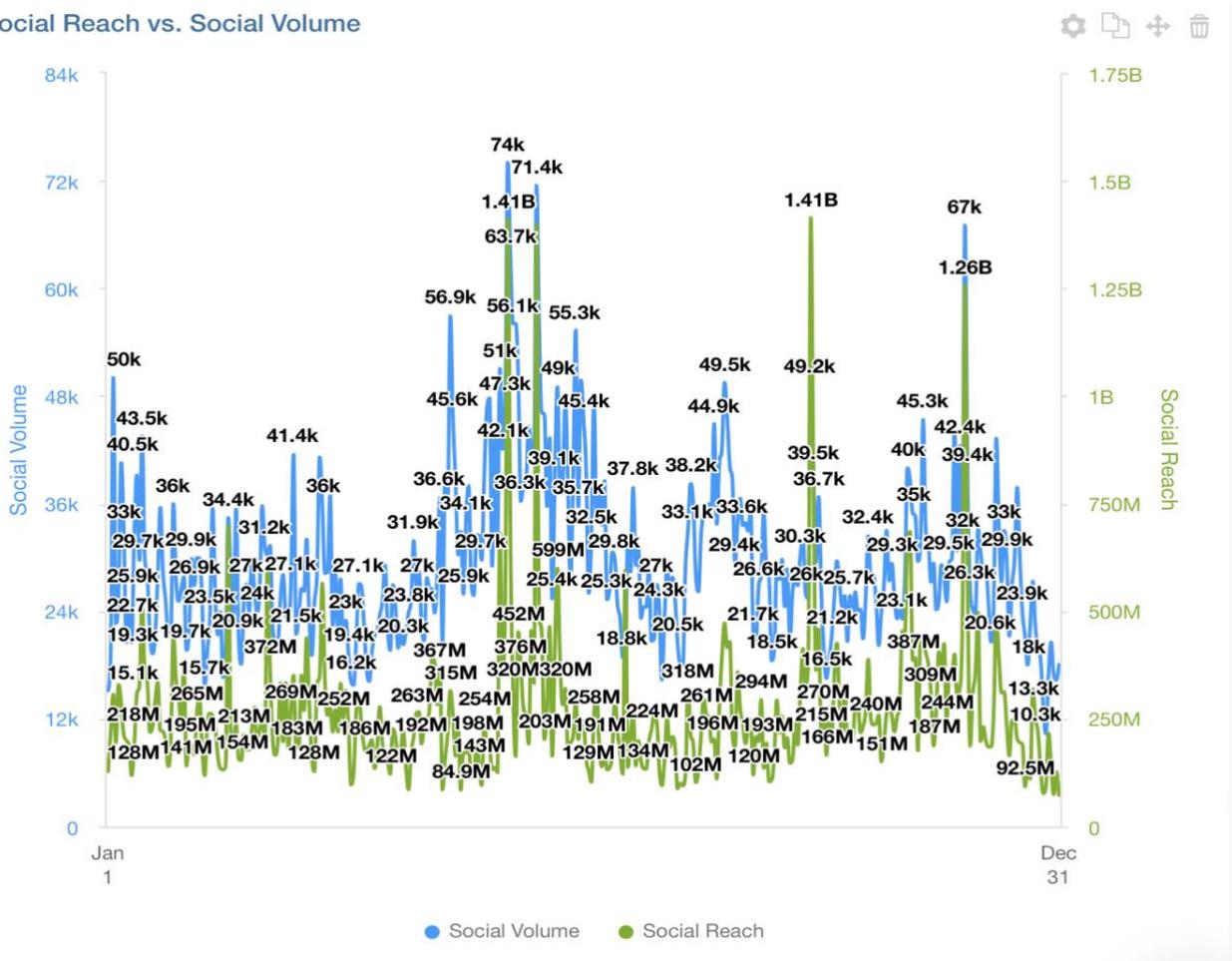
In 2021 a Social Media Manager was appointed with a view to increase content, audience and engagement across more channels. This has resulted in a shift to content that includes both educational and entertaining posts.

Our target audiences are:

1. Healthcare providers: To inform of educational events and materials that will help improve immunisation coverage rates among the Australian population.
2. General public: To generate awareness of infectious diseases and their prevention.

Analysis

Social Reach vs. Social Volume



19. General Media

Overview

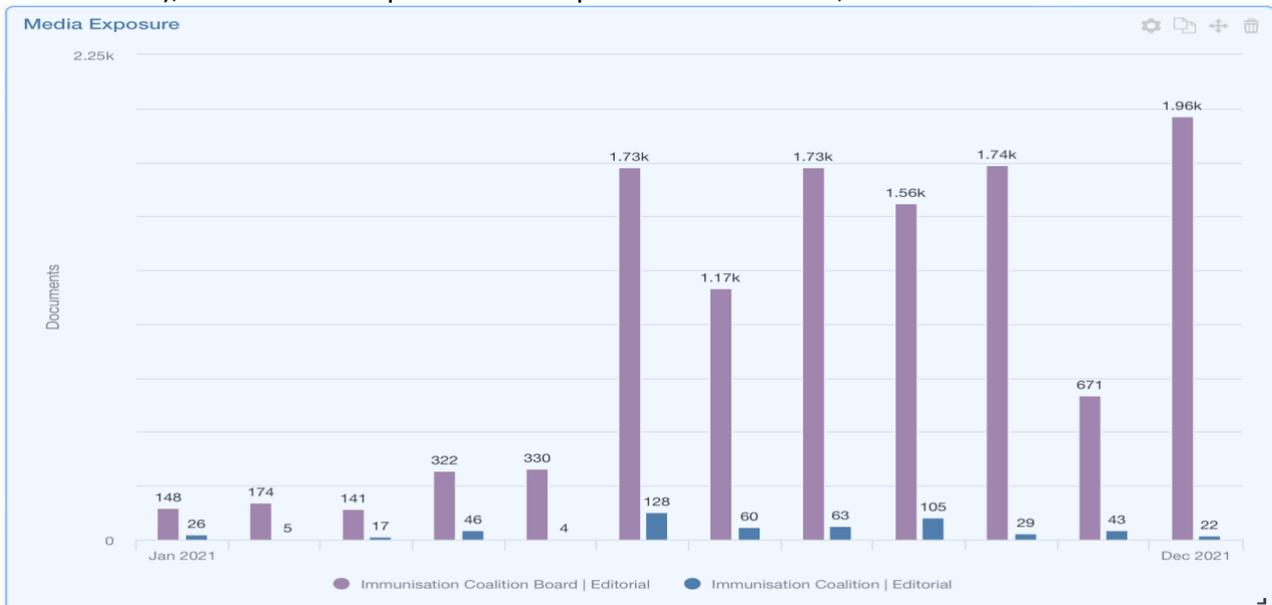
Board of Directors

It has been a very busy year for the IC Board, who represent some of the most prominent spokespeople and key opinion leaders for the organisation.

Key Opinion Leader	No. of Media Articles
Mary-Louise McLaws	4,282
Paul Griffin	2,420
Robert Booy	1,460
Ginni Mansberg	230
Rod Pearce	148
Kim Sampson	59
Gary Grohmann	28

Media Articles

At the end of 2021, the IC had 94 full members, and 7 Associated members. Collectively (including the IC Board), the membership has been responsible for over 12,000 media articles.



Press Releases issued in 2021

Media release 26th April 2021

The Immunisation Coalition called in the Artists!

The Selection Panel chaired by Laureate Professor Peter Doherty had to select winners from almost 100 submissions to the Immunisation Coalition's inaugural Art Prize. The prize winning artwork will be used in the 2021 influenza vaccination campaign that starts today with the Influenza Action Week.

Influenza as an art subject is not new. Artists tried to make sense of the world in the wake of the 1918 influenza pandemic. "Science and art are human attempts to understand and describe the world in which we live. While subjects and methods have different traditions, and the intended audiences are different, the motivations and goals are fundamentally the same. And in times of anti-science movements it is more important than ever to reach people with science based messages in lots of different ways" explains Prof Doherty...

Media Release 29 April 2021

Know the facts, fight the flu!

Experts urge Australians: If you are not in the queue for a COVID vaccine - get your influenza vaccination now.

Latest research is suggesting that less than half the population intend to get a flu shot this year. Last year's flu numbers were kept low because of social distancing and good hygiene, AND BECAUSE A RECORD NUMBER OF AUSTRALIANS GOT THEIR FLU SHOT!

The Immunisation Coalition will host free vaccination clinics this Friday, 30th April at Melbourne and Sydney Town Halls!

Mary-Louise McLaw: "It is unrealistic to expect that life will return to normal this year. While we have almost no COVID-19 local transmissions and with COVID vaccines being rolled out Australians are still at risk of influenza."

IC Chair Rod Pierce: "In winter humidity is low and viral particles can latch onto dry throats and noses easier, so I urge Australians to get the influenza shot in coming weeks, well before the beginning of flu season."

Media Release 2 June 2021

Calls for COVID and flu vaccinations to be administered on the same day

- *The COVID lockdown in Victoria has brought the pace of the vaccine rollout to attention, particularly in aged care.*
- *Healthcare professionals are calling for the COVID and flu vaccination be given on the same day for people at high risk.*
- *Australia's leading voice in whole-of-life immunisation, Immunisation Coalition is asking that the use of concurrent vaccinations in Victorian aged care homes be extended across Australia. With the winter flu season upon us, the delays required between administering the influenza and COVID-19 vaccine creates a larger health risk to the elderly and vulnerable. Despite safe and effective vaccines available for both high-risk and elderly Australians, many remain unvaccinated against both influenza and COVID-19...*

Media Release 22 June 2021

Lack of access to COVID-19 vaccine threatening global immunity - urgent plea to unite developing nations through vaccinations

The Immunisation Coalition is issuing an urgent plea to Australians to help close the global COVID-19 vaccination gap by donating to UNICEF Australia in a bid to improve access in lower income countries.

To date, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastatingly led to the death of approximately 3.9 million people globally.1 Many of those living in high income countries can now access free COVID-19 vaccinations, with many lower income countries yet to receive a single dose.

According to Chair and Director of the Immunisation Coalition Scientific Advisory Committee, Professor Robert Booy, the vaccination disparity represents a significant global issue...

Media Release 19 August 2021

Experts, Grand Mufti press conference on COVID-19 to get the message to Muslims across Australia

Acting as moderator of this afternoon's press conference will be University of Sydney Honorary Professor Robert Booy.

"We must get clear appropriate messages conveyed to local communities through their local leaders, be they religious, community, ethnic, or sports leaders," said Professor Booy, co-lead of the Mass-Gathering Medicine node of the Marie Bashir Institute, which is being re-named Sydney Infectious Diseases.

The University of Sydney and the Immunisation Coalition have developed a series of short explanatory videos to help GPs and pharmacists better explain covid disease and its prevention by vaccination.

Media Release 15 September 2021

Australian medical experts call for all eligible members of the public to be given the choice of Covid-19 vaccine to ensure maximum possible uptake.

Prof Robert Booy, Director of the Immunisation Coalition said: "Covid 19 is a clear and present danger in Australia and there is an urgent need to optimize vaccination uptake".

"The Immunisation Coalition is calling for members of the public to get vaccinated as soon as possible and suggesting to the government that all eligible people be given the choice of vaccination, given that the supplies of mRNA vaccines have markedly increased" says Dr Rod Pearce, Chairman of the Immunisation Coalition.

Prof Robert Booy went on to say: "The 70% double vaccination rate can be reached within a few weeks and 80% uptake could follow within a further 2 weeks. However, protection of the public will be even greater, and better if we continue to promote vaccine uptake as high as possible, for example 90%.

The equity in having a choice for all, whether aged above or below 60, and the large improvement in vaccine supply, can together lead to both far better vaccine uptake and public protection. We may have to live with Covid-19, but its impact can be greatly mitigated with higher vaccine uptake".

Media Release 15 October 2021

A collaboration with the University of Queensland.

COVID-19 RISKS EXPLAINED WITH NEW TOOL

A calculator to help people understand their risk factors for COVID-19 infection and vaccination has been launched by the Immunisation Coalition in collaboration with Australian researchers.

The tool's three co-lead researchers are University of Queensland virologist Dr Kirsty Short, CoRiCal instigator from Flinders University Associate Professor John Litt and GP Dr Andrew Baird.

Dr Kirsty Short said the Immunisation Coalition COVID-19 Risk Calculator (CoRiCal) was an

online tool to support GPs and community members in their discussions about the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccines.

"This tool is really designed to help people make an informed decision around vaccination based on their current circumstances and also see their risk for getting COVID-19 under different transmission scenarios," Dr Short said.

"Users can access the tool and input their age, sex, community transmission and vaccination status to find out their personalised risk calculation.

"For example, you can find out your chance of being infected with COVID-19 versus your chance of dying from the disease.

"You can also find out your chance of developing an atypical blood clot from the AstraZeneca vaccine and see this data in the context of other relatable risks – like getting struck by lightning or winning OzLotto."

The CoRiCal Covid Risk Calculator is in its pilot stage but will be continuously updated in line with the latest health and scientific advice, including risk assessments on Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, pre-existing medical conditions such as obesity and diabetes, and long COVID.

The CoRiCal project included a team of GPs, medical scientists, public health physicians, epidemiologists and statisticians.

Associate Professor John Litt, Immunisation Coalition Scientific Advisory Committee member, said he hoped that CoRiCal would help GPs save time and create an accurate assessment of an individual's risk of COVID-19 or one of the vaccines.

"GPs are spending a lot of time trying to explain the risks of COVID-19 and the various vaccines to their patients," Dr Litt said.

"An accurate, evidence-based tool that is transparent and unaligned with professional groups should help GPs in their task of facilitating COVID vaccination for their patients."

Melbourne-based GP Dr Andrew Baird said CoRiCal was adaptable for booster doses, new viral strains, new vaccines, younger age groups, international markets and even for other infectious diseases.

"It presents risk using simple bar-charts, so that it's easy to compare the risks for different outcomes related to COVID-19 and vaccines," Dr Baird said.

"CoRiCal may help Australia to move towards 90 percent, 95 per cent, or even more of the 16 and over population being fully vaccinated.

"The higher the rate of vaccination in the population, the better it will be for individuals, communities, mental health, health services, and the country."

Media Release 9 November 2021

The Immunisation Coalition is urging healthcare providers, including GPs, pharmacists and relevant clinics, to carefully consider and place their orders for influenza vaccination before November 19, 2021.

As lockdowns ease and borders re-open, a rebound season of influenza is highly probable. But with orders from vaccine providers low, experts warn Australia will experience issues with supply not meeting demand when it comes to influenza vaccination in 2022.

Early indications from Southeast Asia, Europe and the United Kingdom signal a resurgence of influenza in Australia, and around the globe, regardless of low case numbers this year.

"We need to be clear, 2021 has not been reflective of a typical influenza season.

All the measures associated with slowing the transmission of COVID-19, resulted in an abnormal influenza season," said Prof Robert Booy, Chair of the Immunisation Coalition's Scientific Advisory Committee.

Chairman of the Immunisation Coalition, Dr Rod Pearce added “What is important now, is that we avoid a vaccine shortage next year because providers have reduced their vaccine orders for 2022, based on reduced cases and vaccine uptake this year.”

Experts also warn that it is hard to rectify a low or out of stock situation once the season commences, inadvertently putting pressure on the healthcare system whilst additional stock is secured.

“We know that preorders for 2022 are significantly lower than this time last year. We cannot simply turn the manufacturing process on and off for influenza vaccination.

It is important our providers are prepared, by ensuring sufficient supply levels are reached ahead of the season,” said Dr Pearce.

National president of the Pharmacy Guild Trent Twomey said “Community pharmacies are particularly well placed to offer the flu vaccination to patients and this service has proven to be hugely successful and popular with communities across the country and we are encouraging Guild members to pre-order so they are prepared for the 2022 season.”

Whilst focus continues to surround the risk of COVID-19, the Immunisation Coalition wants to remind providers and consumers that influenza can be severe, resulting in hospitalisation and even death, especially for at-risk populations.

“Co-administration of influenza vaccine and COVID-19 boosters is now recommended by ATAGI. This will create greater demand for influenza vaccines and we need to be prepared for it. Securing steady supply of influenza vaccination is our greatest weapon against this virus returning in 2022,” added Dr Rod Pearce.

The Immunisation Coalition and industry stakeholders are committed to reminding Australians of the risk of contracting influenza and to encourage vaccination of consumers in a timely and appropriate manner.

“The time for vaccination is before the outbreak commences, and we intend to coordinate a media awareness campaign for consumers, once we’re confident that supply levels have been reached for the season ahead,” said Dr Pearce.

20. Acknowledgement

Sponsors and Supporters

In addition to the many people who have generously given their time to enable our activities to take place, we also acknowledge the organisations who have supported us throughout the year.

