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WA meeting national immunisation target

In his latest report, *Improving Immunisation Rates of Children in WA*, the Auditor General found WA meets the national immunisation target of 90% for children aged 0 to 5 years.

Vaccines make a significant contribution to reducing the spread of serious diseases and when large numbers of people are immunised there are benefits to individuals and the broader community.

Auditor General Colin Murphy said overall, the approach by WA Health to immunisation was effective but some groups remain at risk of preventable diseases.

'These include Aboriginal infants and toddlers which have lower immunisation rates than non-Aboriginal children.

'We found Health has successfully improved rates of low immunisation but ongoing effort is required to ensure rates do not fall once targeted programs have finished.

'And, the immunisation rate is 2% higher in regional areas than metropolitan Perth, which has some work to do.

'The number of adolescents immunised against the Human Papilloma Virus also needs to improve if WA is to achieve a 90% target. Only 75% were immunised in 2015.

'Health needs to better identify individuals in at risk groups, which includes the homeless and those not registered at birth, to enable them to tailor programs and improve immunisation rates,' Mr Murphy said.

The Commonwealth Department of Human Services holds immunisation data, which Health has been unable to access. Access to this information would allow Health to identify at risk children and tailor programs to them so they don't miss essential vaccines.

The report makes a number of recommendations to assist Health in improving the immunisation rates of children in WA.

The Auditor General's report *Improving Immunisation Rates of Children in WA* (Report 29 – December 2016) and interactive immunisation maps are available on the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au

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