



Government of **Western Australia**
WA Country Health Service



Motivate to vaccinate

Effective conversations with parents and caregivers

Verity Trevenen, Reverse the Trend Project Lead

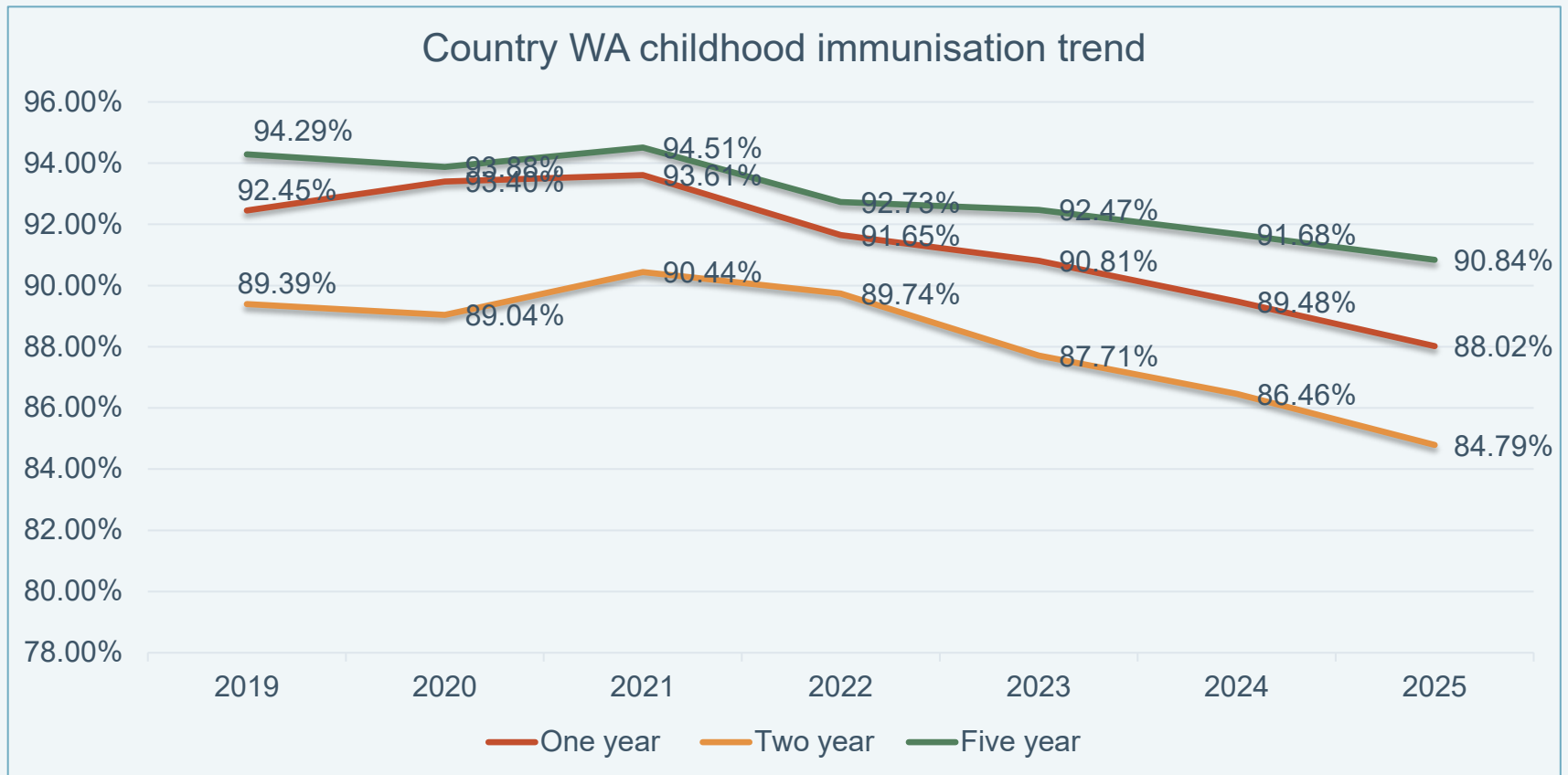




WA Country Health Service acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

Problem statement

Childhood Immunisation coverage rates in country WA are consistently below the 95 per cent required for herd immunity.



Data source: Department of Health and Aging PHN
Childhood immunisation coverage data 2019-2025

Key project strategies

1



Engage families in messages that appeal to their core values by designing and disseminating Values-Based messages.



2



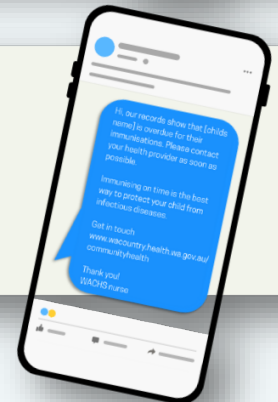
Educate families through conversations with Immunisation providers skilled in Motivational Interviewing who apply the SKAI principles.



3



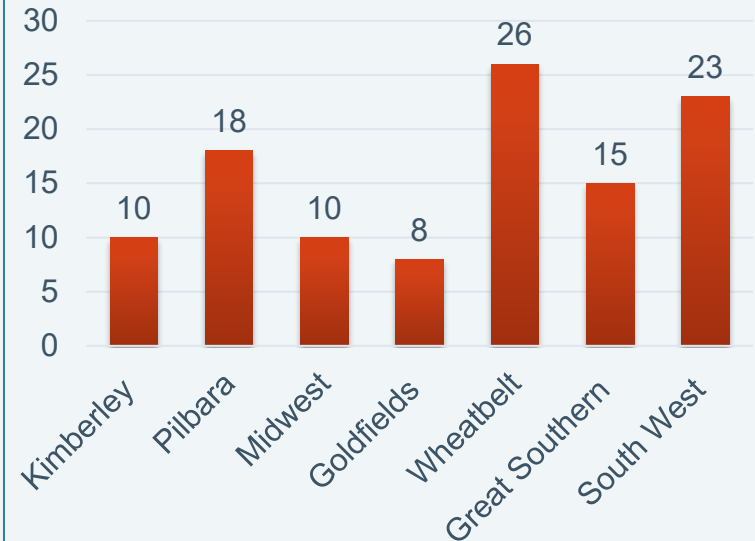
Ease access by sending families text reminders when their child is due and overdue for immunisations and link them to their local service provider.



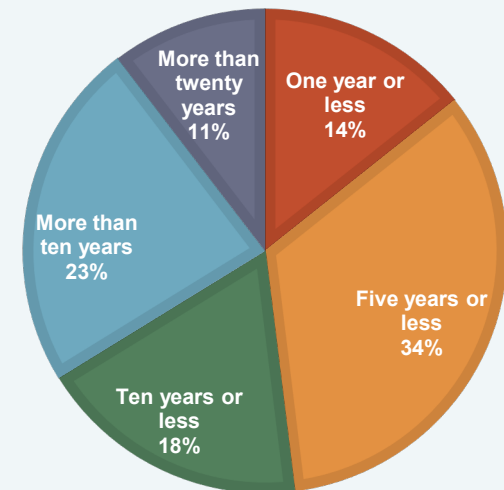
Needs assessment

- **110 staff completed survey**
 - Across all regions
 - Across a mix of career lengths
- **91% of staff** were encountering families **hesitant** about immunisation
- **89% of staff** were encountering families **declining** immunisation

Survey responses by region

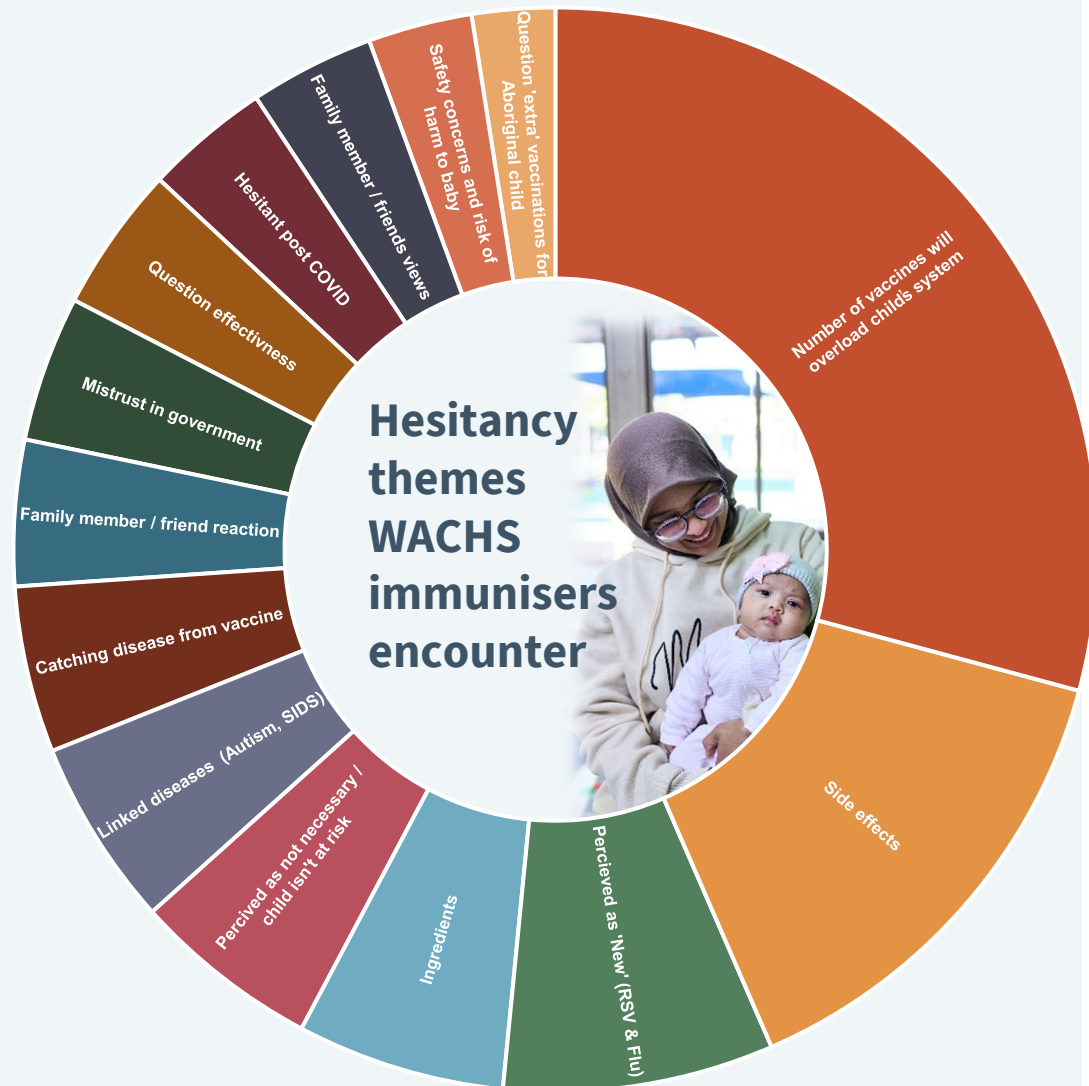


Career length as immuniser



Insights gained

- ‘the internet’ and ‘social media’ were identified as the main sources of misinformation referenced by caregivers.
- Specific mentions:
 - Dr Pauls vaccine friendly plan
 - Dr Ana Maria Podcast and website



Awareness and utilisation of SKAI

- **64.5%** of staff had heard of SKAI
- **58%** had accessed the website at least once
- **39%** had either printed a handout or directed a caregiver to the site
- Only **8%** had completed the full 90-minute SKAI eLearning module
- **80%** of staff expressed interest in Motivational Interviewing training to support conversations with caregivers.

“Be more confident in educating parents”

“Have the right words to say to the parents without the parents feeling judged”

“Have more of a framework for having conversation with parents who are declining or deferring”

“Have the confidence with a family partnership approach to be curious about immunisation hesitancy”

Developing the training pilot

To develop the pilot, we focused on identifying:

- **The right training partners**
- **The most effective delivery mode** (e.g., face-to-face or online)
- **An appropriate format** to support learning
- **Regional staff** willing to participate and test the training



Professor Julie Leask
Faculty of Medicine and
Health, University of
Sydney



Professor Nick Wood
National Centre
Immunisation Research
and Surveillance (NCIRS)



Dr Kasia Bolsewicz
National Centre
Immunisation Research
and Surveillance (NCIRS)



Example role-play card

Pilot training format

Pre-training

- Complete SKAI eLearning (90min) [SKAI eLearning | Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation | SKAI](#)

Interactive Webinar

Vaccine hesitancy and refusal - effective conversations with parents and caregivers (2-hour online webinar)

- **Key topics covered:** Drivers of hesitancy | Motivational Interviewing theory | Scenarios | Role-play | Group discussions

Practice

- Participants were asked to test MI techniques in real-world clinical settings over seven weeks.

Reflection

Reflections on practice session (1-hour online session)

- Participant reflections on strategies applied and what skills they would still like to strengthen.
- Example conversation between Julie and Nick.





Feedback from participants

“I feel like I’ve got my power back in the conversation. If you had of asked me, are you dealing with vaccine hesitant families well? I would have said - Oh yes! But [I’ve realised] I have not been handling them well.”

Sian Whitfield , Child Health Nurse, Wheatbelt

Feedback from participants

“In my first appointment following the session I was able to put all the things we had talked about into practice... whilst she didn’t commit to changing her mind on the day, she was clearly open to the new information and going home to think.

I had a student with me who noticed the difference in how I had carried out the conversation!

Janine Page, Child Health Nurse, South West





Feedback from participants

“My second client for the afternoon [post webinar], it was like they were the hesitant parent scripted. I just couldn’t believe it!

It worked really-well, previously I would have been stumped on their question, but following our conversation, they were fully immunised with RSV also.”

Mariko Bergen, Clinical Nurse, Midwest

Evaluation of Pilot Training

1. Was Motivational Interviewing a skill WACHS immunisation providers wished to strengthen?
2. Was the training package easily accessible?
3. Were the training facilitators the right fit to meet staff needs?
4. Did the format, content, and materials meet participant needs?
5. Did the training improve staff confidence?

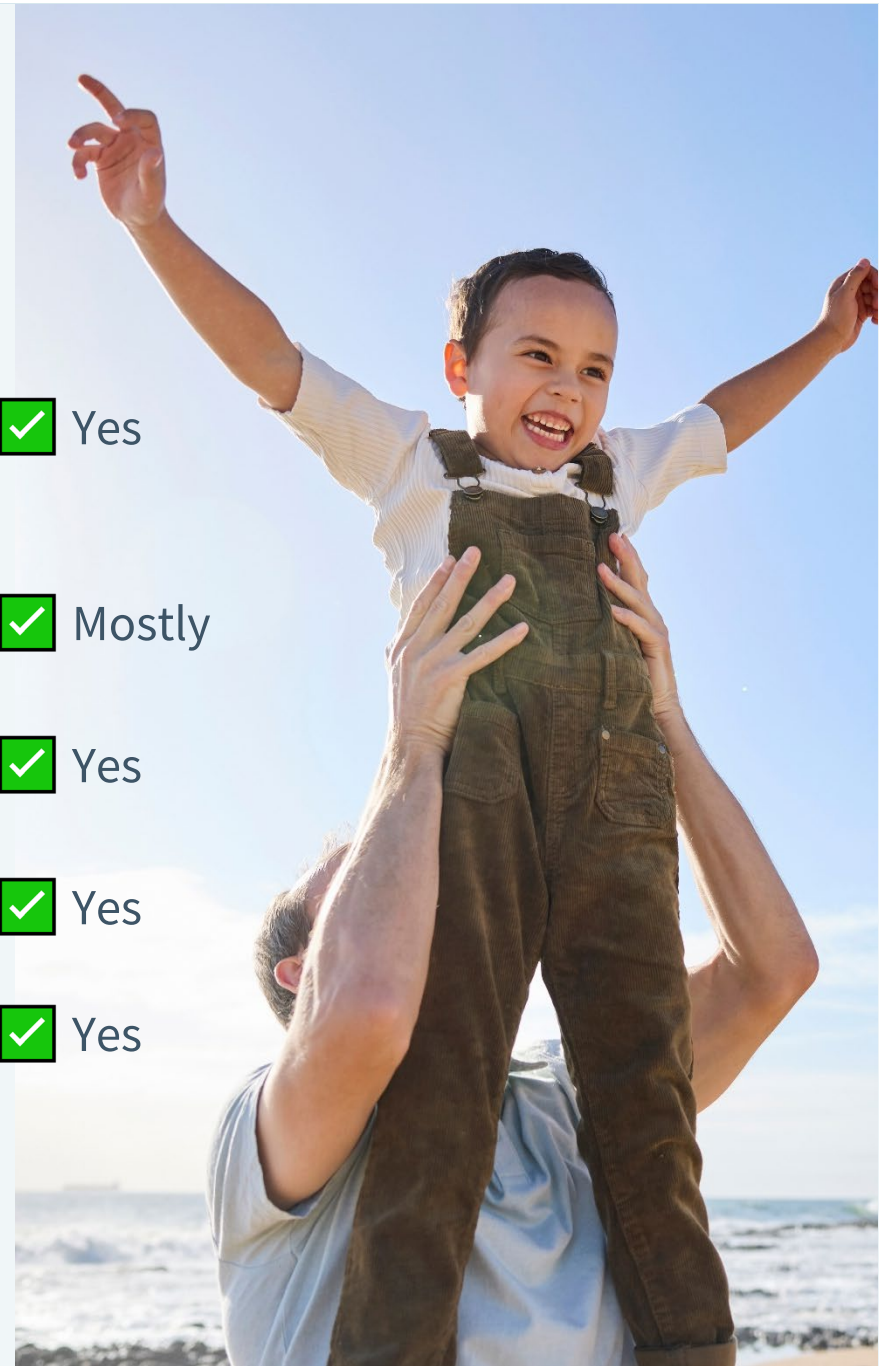
✓ Yes

✓ Mostly

✓ Yes

✓ Yes

✓ Yes





Future horizons

- ✓ Partnering with **WACHS Learning and Development** to transition the pilot into a formal training program hosted on the L&D platform.
- ✓ Continuing collaboration with subject matter experts.
- ✓ Filming required to create a high-quality training package.
- ✓ Target completion: **February 2026.**
- ✓ Initial rollout: all WACHS immunisation providers.
- ✓ Future sharing: package available to other HSPs once finalised.

Do you have some questions?





Thank you

The artwork in this publication is the work of Leeann Kelly-Pedersen