



Ms Meryl Dorey
Public Officer
Australian Vaccination-skeptics Network Inc (AVN)
PO Box 88
BANGALOW NSW 2479

Dear Ms Dorey

Thank you for your letter to the ALP and for the opportunity for us to outline Labor's position on the No Jab, No Pay legislation.

Please find our response to your letter below.

Labor is committed to strengthening immunisation rates so all Australian children have the best chance at growing up strong and healthy.

We believe that parents should have the final say in making health decisions about their child, but when it comes to immunisation there is a strong public interest in ensuring children are immunised.

We believe the science is clear – vaccines save lives.

According to a recent World Health Organisation report, before widespread vaccination in 1980, measles caused an estimated 2.6 million deaths each year. In 2013, the number of deaths from measles had fallen to around 145,000.

Vaccines mean less disease and considerably fewer deaths.

Higher rates of vaccination are vital for infant children who are too young to be vaccinated, as well as the elderly and sick that may be too frail to be vaccinated. They are also vital to people for whom a vaccine may not produce a strong immune response.

That is why it is so important we maintain and encourage high rates of immunisation across the country.

The Social Services Legislation Amendment (No Jab, No Pay) Act on childhood immunisation passed through the Parliament in 2015.

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Exemptions will apply for valid medical reasons, such as when a general practitioner has certified that vaccinating the child would be medically contraindicated, or that vaccination is unnecessary because the child has natural immunity from having contracted the disease in question.

Labor wants to see these changes implemented in a way that increases immunisation rates among vulnerable children.

Labor would also like to see greater emphasis on public awareness campaigns. As our collective memory of disease outbreaks recedes, it is important we remind people of the vital link between immunisations and disease prevention.

Sincerely,

ALP Information Services Unit

Australian Labor Campaign Headquarters

www.alp.org.au



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