

## Free Whooping Cough Vaccines Available for New Parents

South Gippsland Shire Council would like to remind new parents that free Whooping Cough vaccinations are available to eligible individuals through Council's Immunisation Service.

Those eligible under the National Immunisation Program include:

- Pregnant women in their third trimester and their partners
- Parents of newborn babies under six months of age

Any individuals not eligible for the free dosage can be immunised through Council's immunisation service at a cost of \$40.

Whooping Cough is a highly infectious disease that can cause a severe, persistent cough which can be fatal to newborns.

Parents are encouraged to have the vaccine to reduce the chance of spreading the disease to their child. Pregnant women who receive the immunisation pass on protective antibodies to their child, providing some immunity to the child prior to birth.

Council's Acting Team Leader of the Immunisation Program Georgina Kibble said it was vital that parents protected their children from the disease by protecting themselves.

"Babies are not fully protected until they have their third dose of the Pertussis vaccine at six months, so they are vulnerable to Whooping Cough before then.

"It is also important for grandparents, aunts, uncles and other family and friends who will be close to the baby in its first six months of life to have the immunisation," said Ms Kibble.

Council's next immunisation sessions will be held throughout South Gippsland in the first week of February.

A list of immunisation sessions locations and times is available on Council's website at <http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/immunisation>.

Parents wanting the vaccine must book 24 hours prior to their session by contacting Council on 5662 9200.

**PR1786 22/1/16**