



***Here's the
truth....We
know how to
close the gap..***

Ms Katrina Clark
11th National Immunisation Conference
5 to 7th September 2019, The University of Auckland



NCIRS

National Centre
for Immunisation
Research and
Surveillance

Acknowledgements

NSW Aboriginal Immunisation
Healthcare Workers

Dr Alexandra Hendry
& other staff at NCIRS



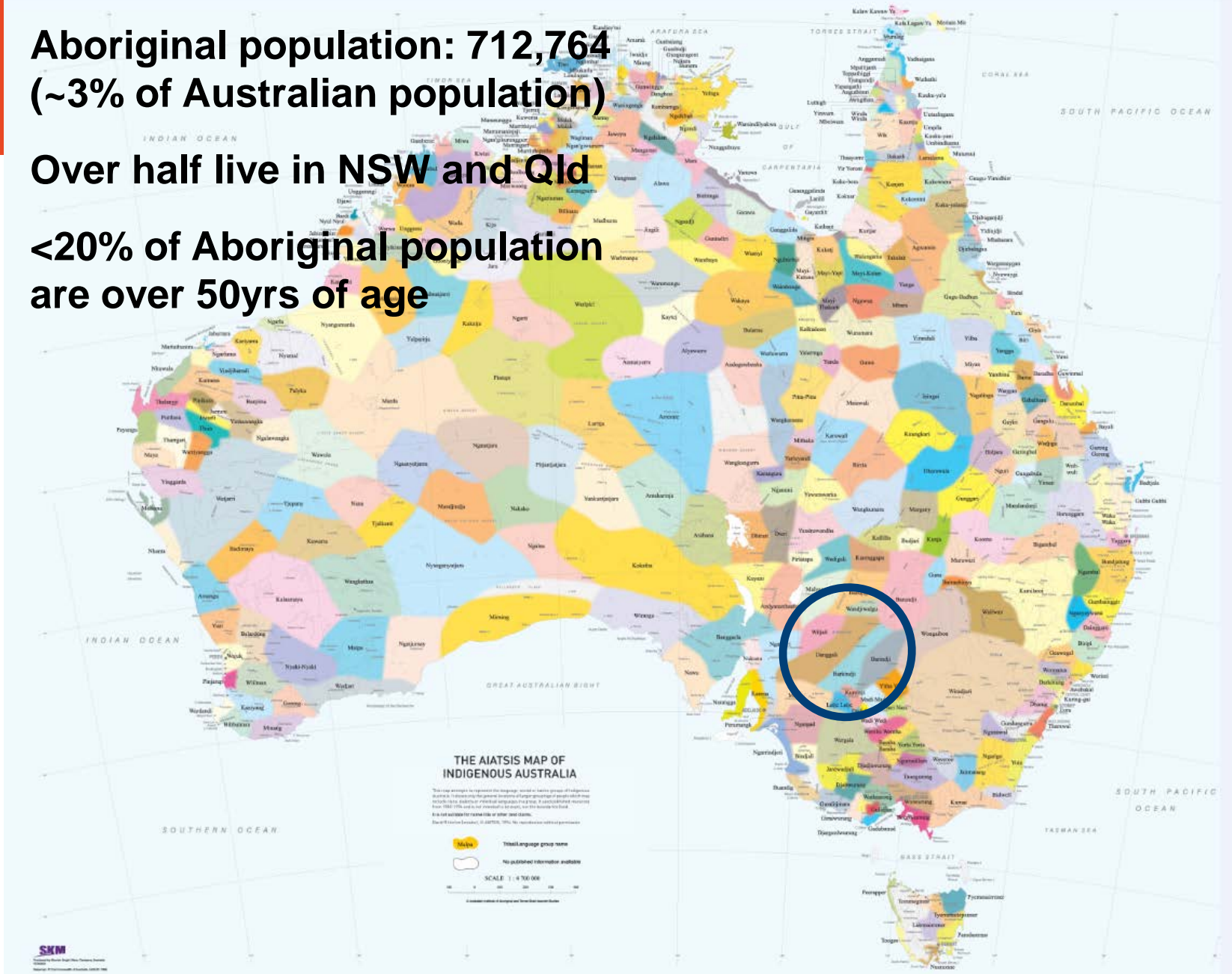
Overview

- Vaccine preventable diseases gaps
- Strategies & successes
 - NSW Aboriginal Healthcare Workers immunisation program
 - Practical solutions

**Aboriginal population: 712,764
(~3% of Australian population)**

Over half live in NSW and Qld

**<20% of Aboriginal population
are over 50yrs of age**



This map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. It used published resources from 1988-1994 and is not intended to be exact, nor the boundaries fixed. It is not suitable for native title or other land claims. David R Horton (creator), © AIATSIS, 1996. No reproduction without permission. To purchase a print version visit: www.aiatsis.ashop.com.au/

Today's key VPD /immunisation gaps

- Hib disease

- 10 x higher in children <5yrs

- Hepatitis B

- 10 x higher in children <5yrs
- 8 x higher in people aged 15-<25yrs
- 3x higher in people aged 25-<49yrs
- Vaccine not funded for adults



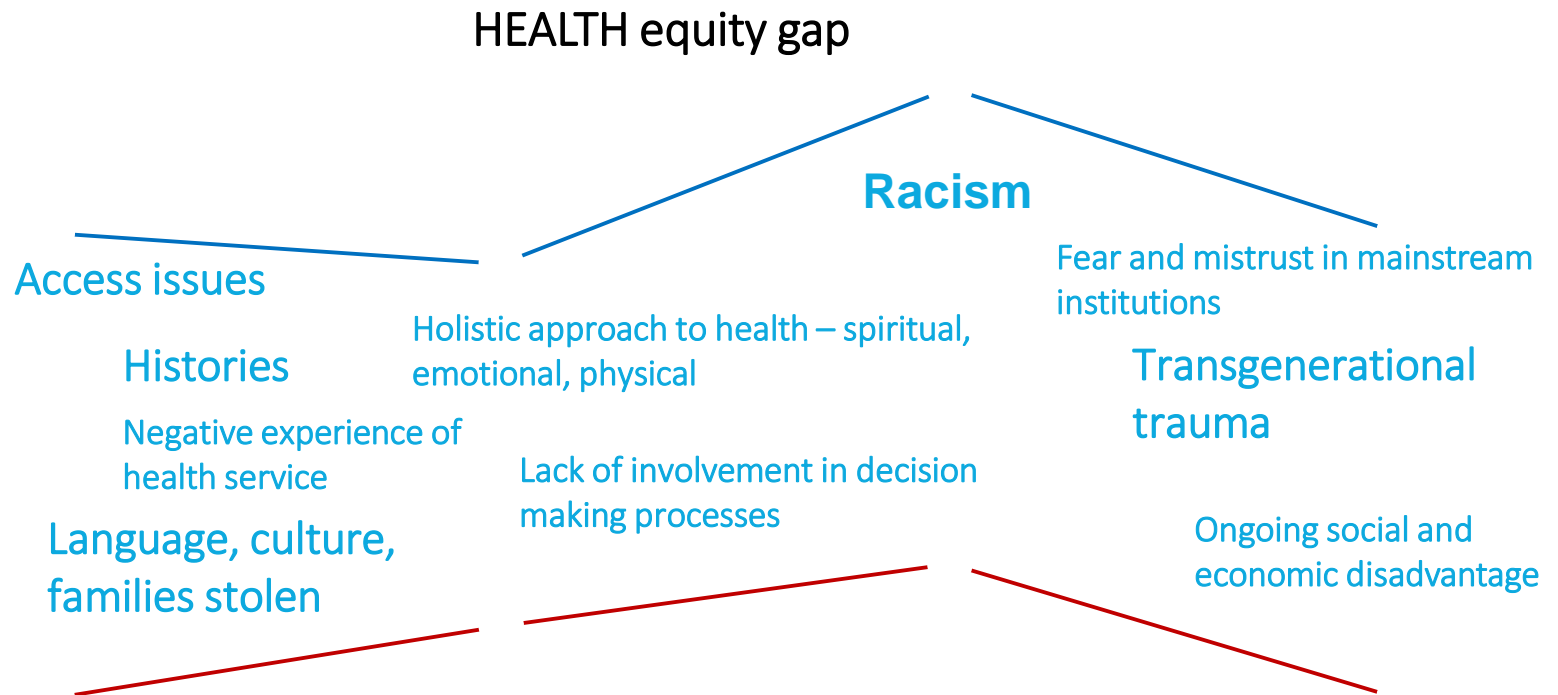
- Influenza

- significantly higher hospitalisations and deaths across all ages
- only funded for all ages in 2019

- Meningococcal B

- 11 x higher in children <10yrs
- Vaccine not funded

Bridging the Health Equity Gap



What impacts immunisations?

- **Inability to access the health service**
 - Lack of transport
 - language
 - community health centre opening hours
- **Other competing priorities** - food, housing, caring for other family members, work
- **Healthcare system structure**
 - services not culturally respectful
 - racism
 - changes to immunisation schedule
 - access to life saving vaccines
 - top down approach

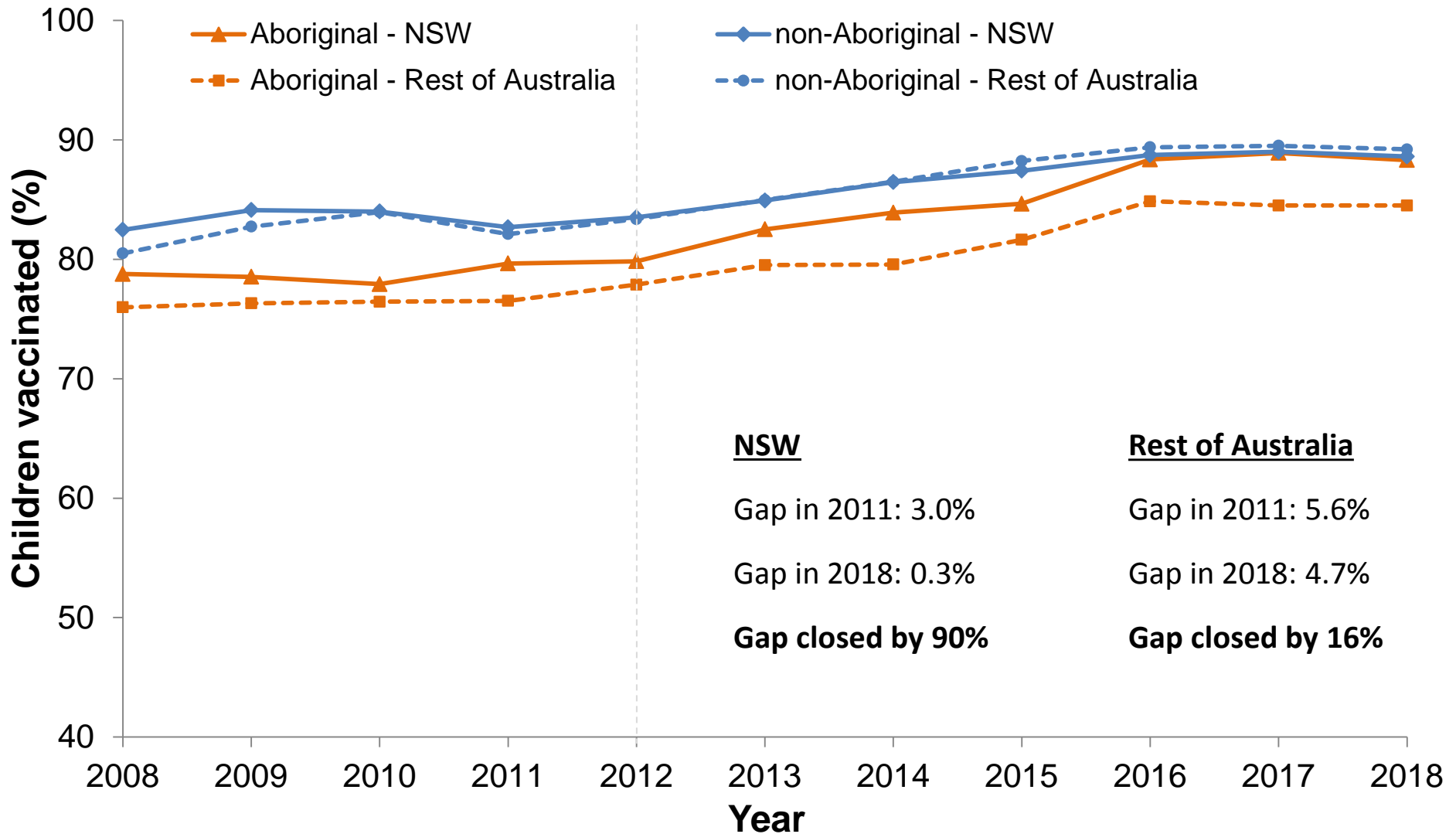
NSW Aboriginal Immunisation Healthcare Worker (AIHCW) Program

- Funded by NSW Health since July 2012.
- 13 FTE AIHCWs based in NSW Public Health Units
- KPIs assess vaccination coverage at 9, 15 & 51 months of age
 - slightly earlier than the usual milestones of 12, 24 & 60 months of age

Strategies that works: NSW Aboriginal Immunisation Healthcare Worker (AIHCW) Program

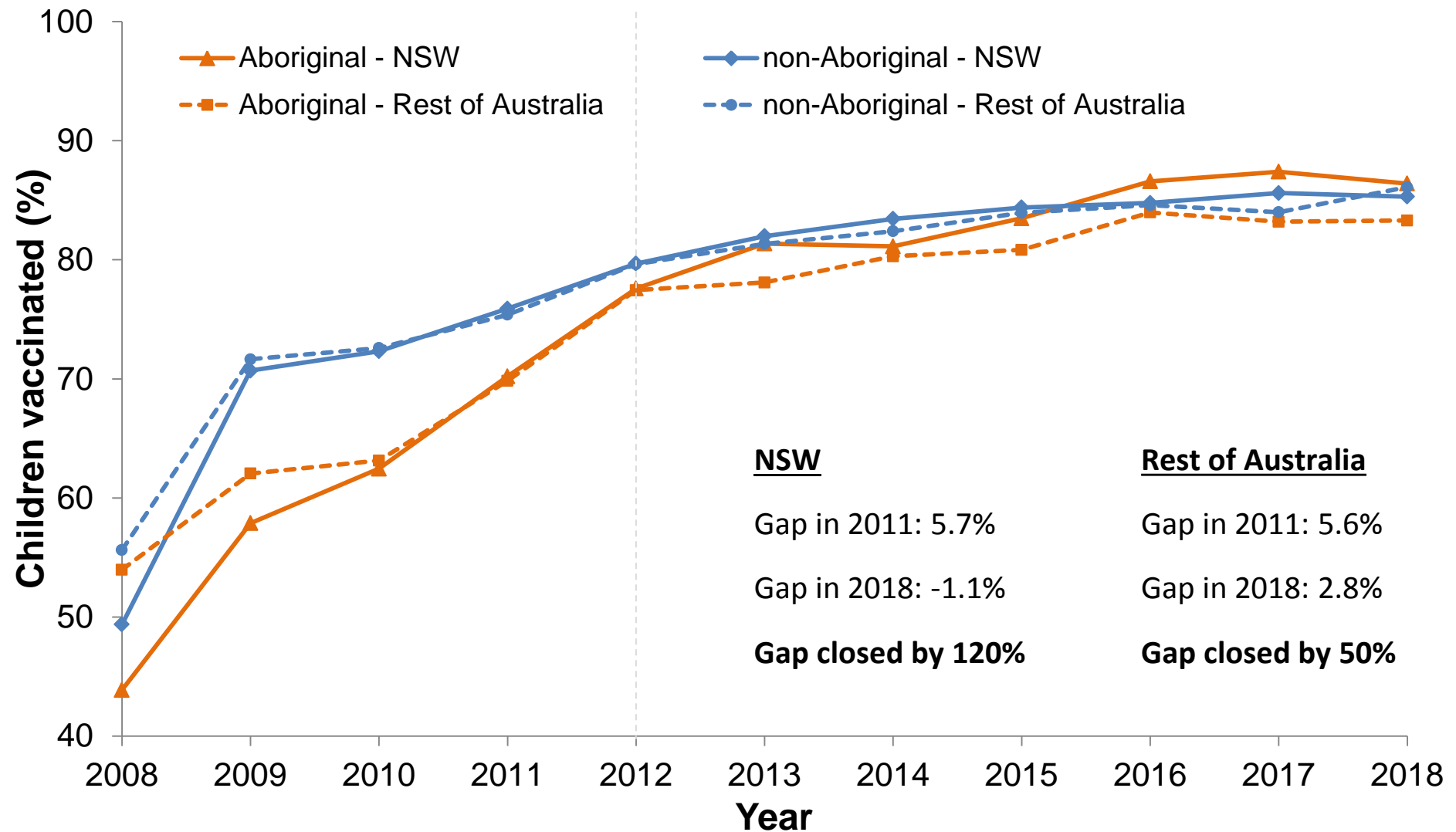
- Employment of Aboriginal People
- Closely working with communities to promote vaccination
- Improve identification of Aboriginal children
- Pre- calling notices before schedule vaccination time points
- Linking up services that are already out there
- Attending Aboriginal Medical Services, GPs & Community Health Centres
- Actively participating at Community events

Trends in 'Fully immunised' by 15 months of age



Aboriginal Immunisation Health Care Worker Program implemented from July 2012 in NSW

Trends in 'Fully immunised' by 51 months of age



NSW

Gap in 2011: 5.7%

Gap in 2018: -1.1%

Gap closed by 120%

Rest of Australia

Gap in 2011: 5.6%

Gap in 2018: 2.8%

Gap closed by 50%

Aboriginal Immunisation Health Care Worker Program implemented from July 2012 in NSW

NSW Aboriginal Immunisation Program

The Sydney Morning Herald
INDEPENDENT. ALWAYS.

In NSW, these Aboriginal health workers already know how to close the gap

A quiet revolution has been taking place in NSW. And if we pay attention, it could help us close the Indigenous health gap.

By [Amy Corderoy](#)

November 6, 2015 – 12.23pm



It started with the number eight.

That number might seem small, but if you're a mum with a baby it could be the difference between life and death.



THE MEDICAL JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIA

MJA

Research

Closing the vaccination coverage gap in New South Wales: the Aboriginal Immunisation Healthcare Worker Program

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The known Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous Australian) children have a higher risk of contracting vaccine-preventable diseases than other Australian children. While vaccination coverage rates for Indigenous children are improving, timely vaccination remains a problem.

The new The Aboriginal Immunisation Healthcare Worker Program, funded by NSW Health since 2012, has contributed to improving the timely vaccination of Indigenous children in NSW. In 2016, there was no statistically significant difference in coverage between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children at three age milestones (9, 15, and 51 months) in NSW.

The implications Dedicated programs can improve coverage and timeliness of vaccination of Indigenous Australian children.

Abstract

Objectives: To assess vaccination coverage and timeliness among Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in New South Wales and the rest of Australia, with a particular focus on changes in the vaccination coverage gaps after the introduction of the Aboriginal Immunisation Healthcare Worker (AIHCW) Program in NSW in 2012.

Design: Cross-sectional analysis of Australian Immunisation Register data (2008–2016).

Main outcome measures: Annual estimates of full vaccination coverage at 9, 15 and 51 months of age for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in NSW and the rest of Australia; differences in coverage between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children at each milestone.

Results: The proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous

Summary of the AIHCW Program Achievements

- Improved vaccination coverage and timeliness
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal vaccination gap has closed substantially in NSW
- Commitment of resources to dedicated programs can have significant impact on closing the vaccination gap
- Improvements in the rest of Australia, but not as pronounced as NSW

Aboriginal perspective, captured by Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu 'Rom Watangu' The law of the land..

“What Aboriginal people ask is that the modern world now makes the sacrifices necessary to give us a real future. To relax its grip on us. To let us breathe, to let us be free of the determined control exerted on us to make us like you. And you should take that a step further and recognise us for who we are, and not who you want us to be. Let us be who we are – Aboriginal people in a modern world – and be proud of us. Acknowledge that we have survived the worst that the past had thrown at us, and we are here with our songs, our ceremonies, our land, our language and our people – our full identity. What a gift this is that we can give you, if you choose to accept us in a meaningful way.”

Thank you and

