

Australian Medical Association
Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (No Jab, No Pay)
Bill 2015

Answers to Questions on Notice – 2 November 2015 – Brisbane

Response to the Committee's question on medical exemptions:

The AMA recognises that the Australian Immunisation Handbook (currently 10th Edition, updated in June 2015) a key document in terms of providing guidance to GPs about exemptions to immunisation. Contrary to what the earlier witnesses indicated, the Handbook provides information on a range of contraindications and precautions that need to be taken with certain groups such as those who are at risk of anaphylaxis, those who are immunocompromised, those who are receiving immunoglobulin or other blood products etc. This material is contained in sections 4.9.9 Contraindications and 4.9.10 Precautions. Further material on at risk groups or possible exemptions is also provided under each listed individual disease names.

It is also critical to recognise that GPs will also use their clinical judgement in assessing children who are eligible for a medical exemption. As Dr Kidd testified, medical exemptions are rare, but with the guidance provided by the Immunisation Handbook, and their own clinical judgement, GPs are well equipped to identify the small number of children who should not receive vaccination.