1. On 23 May 2013, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP, Member for Bundamba, introduced the Private Member’s Bill, Public Health (Exclusion of Unvaccinated Children from Child Care) Amendment Bill 2013 (the Bill).
2. The object of this Bill is to give a person in charge of an education and care service or child care service the ability to refuse that a child who is not fully immunised be enrolled in the child care facility or to allow them to participate in particular activities or services provided by the facility. The changes would apply only to child care facilities (including kindergartens) and not to primary or secondary schools.
3. The Bill is not supported. There is currently no compelling public health evidence to support the effectiveness of such legislation.
4. The Bill provides that the changes are not compulsory, and the person in charge of an early childhood education and care (ECEC) service would have the discretion to refuse enrolment or participation in certain activities, which would mean that parents could not have a reasonable expectation of being treated consistently across ECEC services. The Bill allows for exemption on medical grounds; however is not consistent with current federal legislation which allows exemption for conscientious objection on philosophical and religious grounds.
5. The Health and Community Services Committee (the Committee) tabled its report on the Bill (Report No. 29) in September 2013 and recommended that the Bill not be passed. The Committee made a further recommendation that the Legislative Assembly consider supporting any future Bill that would encourage parents to ensure that children are appropriately vaccinated on entry to child care. Any such legislation should include provision for medical exemption and informed conscientious objection (philosophical, religious or medical), with an emphasis on ensuring that parents are provided with education and information on immunisation.
6. The Government response to Recommendation 3 of the Committee report, which was directed to government, was tabled on 20 December 2013. The response indicated recognition of the importance of communication about immunisation and provided information with regard to Queensland Health’s public education campaign to date. The response briefly outlined Department of Health plans for an immunisation strategy which will include promotional/ educational campaigns on the benefits of immunisation and the key messages for the target groups.
7. Cabinet approved that the Public Health (Exclusion of Unvaccinated Children from Child Care) Amendment Bill 2013 not be supported.
8. *Attachments*
   * [Public Health (Exclusion of Unvaccinated Children from Child Care) Amendment Bill 2013](Attachments/Bill.pdf)
   * [Explanatory Notes](Attachments/ExNotes.pdf)
   * [Health and Community Services Committee Report No. 29](Attachments/Committee%20Report.pdf)
   * [Government Response to the Health and Community Services Committee Report No. 29](Attachments/Govt%20Response%20to%20Committee%20Report.PDF)