

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Has your son had the HPV vaccine?**

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Towong Shire Council is reminding parents of boys in Year 9 that they have until 31 December 2014 to get their sons vaccinated for free as part of the National Immunisation Program.

Genital human papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common sexually transmitted infection which usually causes no symptoms and goes away by itself but if left undetected can cause cancer. The HPV vaccine (Gardasil) can significantly decrease your son's chances of developing HPV-related illnesses including genital warts and cancer later in life.

To be effective, the vaccination consists of three courses. It is usually administered during secondary school and prevents ninety percent of all HPV-related cancers in men, such as cancers of the penis, anus, and oropharynx and ninety percent of genital warts. It has been hailed as a breakthrough in preventative health. The third round of secondary school vaccinations will occur on Friday 24 October at the Tallangatta Secondary College and on Friday 31 October at the Corryong Secondary College.

This year marks five years since the vaccine was introduced in Australia as part of the National Immunisation Program, which recommends girls and boys having the vaccine at 12–13 years of age. However, the vaccine is also being offered to boys aged 14–15 years for free until the end of 2014, as part of a catch up program.

If you are unsure if your son is fully immunised, please contact the National HPV Vaccination Program Register on 1800 478 734.

For more information about the vaccine and HPV, visit [hpvaccine.org.au](http://hpvaccine.org.au) or call the Cancer Council Victoria Helpline on 13 11 20. For information about the school vaccination program, contact Towong Shire Council on (02) 6071 5100.