

John Castrilli MLA



Whooping cough program expanded

To combat the rise of whooping cough in WA, the State Government last month announced that free vaccinations would be available to all parents of young babies.

Up to 50% of babies who catch whooping cough get it from family member, who often don't realise they have the infection because symptoms are less severe in adults.

Several local grandparents contacted my office with concerns about whooping cough, and I am pleased that the free vaccination program has now been expanded to include adult carers of babies, such as grandparents.

This is good news for families, as the vaccination will help stop adults from catching and passing on the disease, which is potentially fatal to babies.

Babies will continue to receive the whooping cough vaccine as part of their immunisation program and new mothers will be able to receive their free vaccination while still in hospital.

Fathers, grandparents and other adult carers of babies born between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011, in the Greater Bunbury area will be able to receive the vaccination at the Hudson Road Community Health Centre in Bunbury.

Call the Centre on 9795 2814 for more information or to book an appointment.

Grants available to women's groups

This year marks the centenary of International Women's Day and the State Government has planned a range of events and celebrations to mark this milestone.

Grants are also on offer across Western Australia to help improve opportunities and services for women.

I urge local groups and organisations to consider applying for the grants of up to \$5000, for projects which help encourage greater participation and opportunities for women in our community.

Eligible projects would include those which strengthen the social and economic wellbeing of women; increase their participation in the community; promote positive images of women; and encourage a sense of leadership and safety.

Last year, projects which received funding included courses on relationships and self-esteem, improving skills for women in business, and support groups for new mothers.

Guidelines and information for applicants are available at www.communities.wa.gov.au/grants or by phoning the Department for Communities on 6217 8400. The closing date is April 15, 2011.

Application forms are also available from my office at 4B Spencer Street or phone 9791 3636.