



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILLS**

**Social Services Legislation  
Amendment (No Jab, No Pay) Bill 2015**

**Second Reading**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 16 September 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, 16 September 2015	<b>Source</b>	House
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<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Morrison, Scott, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

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**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Minister for Social Services) (09:25): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill will introduce the government's No Jab, No Pay announcement from the 2015 budget. This is an important initiative aimed at boosting childhood immunisation rates.

From 1 January 2016, the bill will ensure children fully meet immunisation requirements before their families can access the childcare benefit, childcare rebate or the family tax benefit part A supplement.

Immunisation requirements will also be extended to include children of all ages. At present, a child's vaccination status is only checked at ages one, two and five for the family tax benefit part A supplement, and up to age seven for the childcare payments.

Crucially, the government is ending the conscientious objection exemption to children's vaccinations for access to these family assistance payments.

Parents who vaccinate their children should have confidence that they can take their children to child care in particular, without the fear that their children will be at risk of contracting a serious or potentially life-threatening illness because of the conscientious objections of others.

Exceptions to the policy will apply only for valid medical reasons—for example, not for religious reasons—such as when a general practitioner has certified that vaccinating the child would be medically contraindicated, or that vaccination is unnecessary because the child has natural immunity from having contracted the disease in question.

Families with children participating in an approved vaccine study will be taken to meet the immunisation requirements for the duration of the study, and similar rules will apply where a vaccine is temporarily unavailable.

The requirements will also be met if a recognised immunisation provider certifies that the child has an equivalent level of immunisation through an overseas vaccination program.

Lastly, the secretary of my department will be able to determine that a child meets the immunisation requirements after considering any decision-making principles set out in a legislative instrument made by the minister.

The choice made by some families not to vaccinate their children is not supported by public policy or medical research and advice to the government, nor should such action be supported by taxpayers in the form of family payments.

Australia now has childhood vaccination rates over 90 per cent, from one to five years of age. Under the present arrangements, the vast majority of families receiving family payments—around 97 per cent—already meet the current immunisation requirement at the relevant age points.

However, more needs to be done to ensure we protect our children and our community from preventable diseases. That includes those who, for genuine medical reasons, find themselves in a position where they are not able to be vaccinated and rely on the herd vaccination to protect their health.

The new policy will tighten up the rules and reinforce the importance of vaccination in protecting public health, especially for children. I commend this bill to the House.

**Ms King:** On indulgence, as the shadow health minister, I commend the minister for the measure.

Debate adjourned.