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**RAPC submission to the ATAGI Public
Consultation: Maternal Pertussis
Vaccination Recommendations 2019**

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI)'s proposed changes to maternal pertussis vaccination recommendations in the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Australia, on average, experiences pertussis outbreaks every three to four years¹. We acknowledge that pertussis is a highly contagious disease and the disease burden of pertussis morbidity and mortality is significant, especially in young infants less than six months of age. We consider reducing the risk of pertussis associated complications and death among young infants an important public health issue.

Although the current evidence for optimal timing of maternal pertussis immunisation is not conclusive at this point in time, the RACP supports broadening the time window for maternal pertussis immunisations to include the second trimester, based on the evidence and rationale outlined in the consultation paper. This recommendation should be supported by a proactive approach to maternal pertussis vaccine pharmacovigilance through data collection and monitoring of any associated adverse pregnancy outcomes.

The RACP also supports the integration of this advice under the pregnancy vaccination recommendations in the Australian Immunisation Handbook to allow timely updates in the future, especially where new evidence is available. With respect to the summary box on page 4 of the consultation paper, the RACP suggests the inclusion of the information on vaccine effectiveness; prescribers will be better informed by quantitative representations of the actual risk reduction by percentage and will better understand the magnitude of the issue.

The RACP agrees with the benefits and potential risks stated in the consultation paper and maintains that the broader time window will not only greatly benefit those pregnant women who attend antenatal appointments less regularly, but will also improve immunisation equity overall.

Should you require any further information regarding this response, please contact Bella Wang, Policy Officer at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED].

¹ Health Vic: Pertussis (Whooping cough). Available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice/pertussis-whooping-cough>