



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

Minister for Indigenous Australians
Member for Hasluck

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ernie Dingo Hits the Road for New Indigenous Vaccination Campaign in Remote WA

A new campaign to drive Indigenous vaccination rates in remote Western Australia takes off this week with Australian TV personality Ernie Dingo at the wheel.

Vax the Outback begins its journey from Perth to the Pilbara on Wednesday, a project delivered by Aboriginal Story Agency BushTV and funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

Minister for Indigenous Australians Ken Wyatt said the new the campaign is focusing on the Pilbara region of Western Australia to address low vaccination rates and high levels of vaccine hesitancy among its Indigenous communities.

“Since the start of the vaccination program, we’ve been working with WA’s Department of Health, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and other Indigenous organisations, including Indigenous media, to ensure Indigenous people in the state get vaccinated.

“Vaccination uptake in WA, particularly in remote areas, has been slow however – with the Pilbara region having some of the lowest Indigenous vaccination rates in the country.

“It’s vital we use every tool at our disposal in the lead up to WA opening its borders – that’s why I’ve asked Ernie to take *Vax the Outback* to the Pilbara to provide that extra face-to-face support.

“This new venture focuses on one-on-one engagement via traditional yarning circles and barbecue events for cut through.

“I am pleased that the National Indigenous Australians Agency is funding the Campaign through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. I’d also like to acknowledge the support that staff in our Greater Western Australia Regional Office are providing to Ernie and BushTV.”

Mr Dingo said he was working closely with the NIAA Regional Office staff to identify locations with target age groups where *Vax the Outback* would have the most effect.

“I know that we can beat hesitation around vaccines and needles with this approach – that’s why I’m packing up and heading up North to have a yarn with local influencers and elders in each community.

“I’ll be having a cuppa and a yarn with countrymen over brekky barbecues, listening to their concerns and encouraging them to be ready for the jab when the health teams come through the towns again.

“It’s about knowledge, about making our communities feel ready for the vaccine when it comes around.

“I’ll also be out there with the BushTV crew filming it all, getting on Indigenous radio waves, and driving home that message – that to protect ourselves, our families, our elders and communities we’ve all got to get vaccinated.”

Ernie Dingo and BushTV depart Perth and will start *Vax the Outback* in the Hedland region, visiting a number of communities including, but not limited to: Karratha, Roebourne, Onslow, Tom Price, Paraburdoo & Newman.

[Watch BushTV’s *Vax the Outback* video here.](#)

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