

A Few Facts about Meningitis Centre Australia

Meningitis Centre Australia was born in 1992 with our Chairman Bruce Langoulant and our Ambassador Professor Fiona Stanley, an indigenous and infectious diseases expert (former Australian of the Year 2003), leading the charge.

Bruce's family has been affected by meningitis, after his daughter Ashleigh contracted Pneumococcal meningitis at age six months of age, on Boxing Day 1989, which has left her severely disabled. She is unable to walk, talk, hear and suffers from cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

Meningitis can kill or disable anyone particularly children of up to 2 years in 24 hours.

Over the years, we have witnessed the highs and lows of the incidence of the bacteria causing Meningitis. Numbers have reduced from around 5 cases per week in WA to less than 3 per month on average. Multiply these figures by 10 for the national picture. The progressive introduction of childhood vaccines over this time has been the main contributor to this spectacular reduction.

Bruce successfully led the public campaigning and lobbying from 2001-2004 for the introduction of the pneumococcal vaccine to the National Immunisation Plan. All infants and children have received this life saving vaccine FREE as part of the routine childhood vaccine program since January 2005.

The Meningococcal B vaccine is our current project. This disease continues to kill and maim.

Viral Meningitis remains more common as it is not vaccine preventable. Symptoms are similar but outcomes are less damaging and deaths are rare. Demand for information is a constant.

Our Centre offers all families across the state and the country access to information and support on Meningitis in all its forms. Our website attracts 25,000 – 32,000 hits a month.

Adam Selwood of the West Coast Eagles is a survivor of meningitis as is Mitch Duncan of Geelong Football Club and both are Centre Ambassadors.