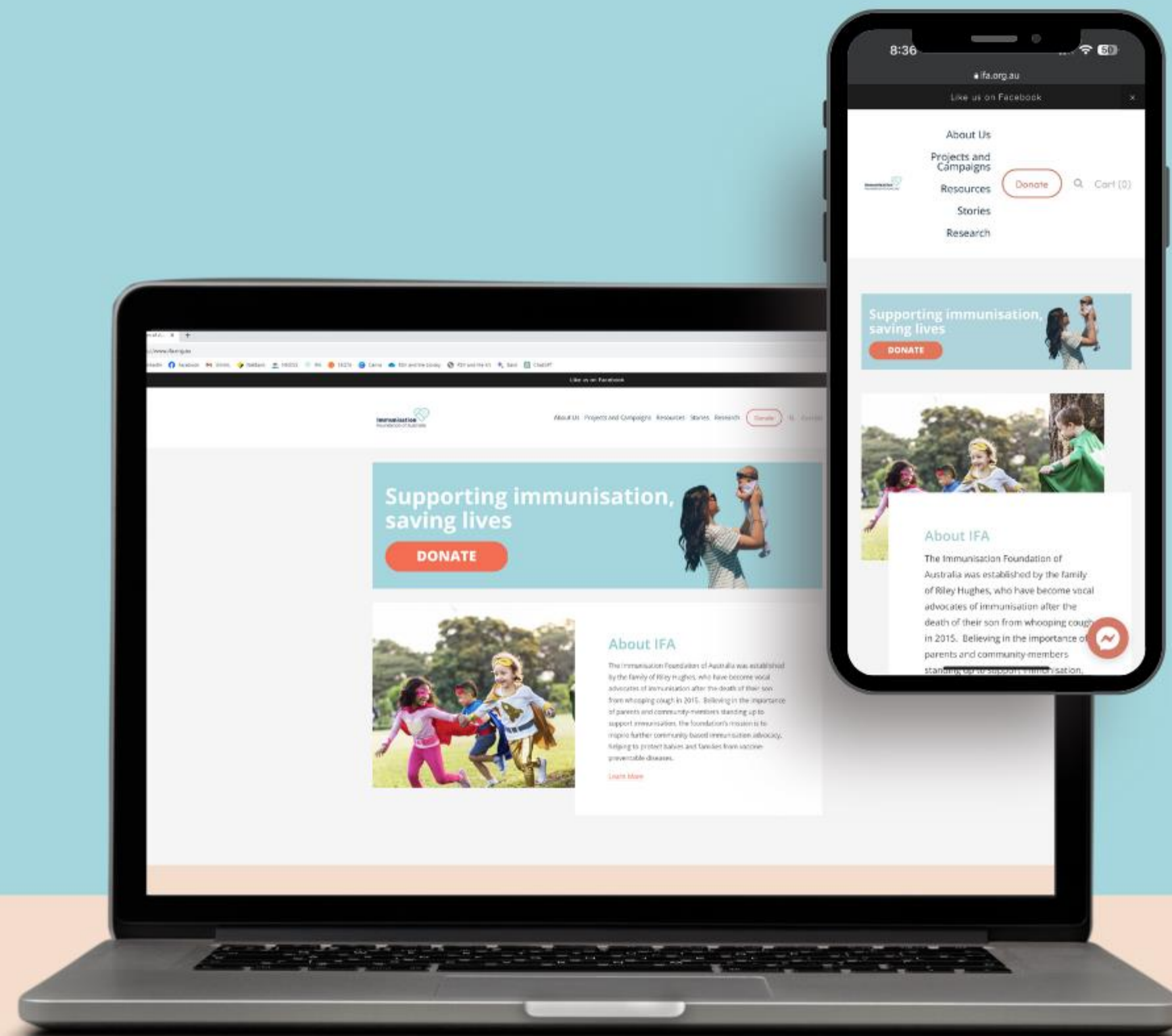


*Community Conversations*  
**FLU VACCINE - AUGUST 2023**



www.ifa.org.au

Concerned about the low uptake of flu vaccines in children aged <12 years, we engaged with 200+ families (online and in person) across Australia, all of whom are generally supportive of childhood vaccination, to better understand motivation and potential barriers.

“  
**Did you get the flu vaccine for your children this year? If not, why not?**  
”

## Who did we ask?

- Community Advisory Group
- Facebook page
- Online parenting groups



# Recurring Themes

1

## Illness

Children unwell too frequently, and parents feel they need to wait for their child to recover. Those who had children contract flu early in the season generally didn't bother to vaccinate later in season.

2

## Needle-Phobia

A number of parents who want their children to have the flu vaccine feel unable to do so due to child's needle-phobia.

3

## Cost of living

Some families find it difficult to pay for flu vaccines and associated GP appointments, and many parents are working increased hours due to current high costs of living making it more challenging to access a GP.



# Recurring Themes

4

## Timing

Many parents spoke about their "busy-ness", and those that had forgotten or left it a bit late assumed there wasn't much point getting it "this late in the season" (August).

5

## Access

Some GP clinics don't stock flu vaccines which means multiple appointments. Several parents had access issues due to GPs being so heavily booked. Many parents expressed desire for pharmacist vaccination for school-aged children.

6

## Mandate Removal

Several parents mentioned that the removal of mandates for aged care visitors meant that their child no longer needed a flu vaccine to visit grandparents in aged care.





# Recurring Themes

7

## Distrust

A number of parents highlighted that Covid brought on a "distrust of the medical community", making them more cautious about their vaccine choices.

"This year has just been insanely busy (and endless sick kids) and unfortunately it's just been something that's fallen through the cracks"

8

## Perceived Differently

Some parents mentioned that flu vaccines aren't a "regular", "standard" or "normal" vaccine, and that it's not as important or necessary as "routine" childhood vaccines.

# Areas for opportunity

- **Illness contraindications** for flu vaccination: improved education for parents and healthcare providers
- **Needlephobia**: How can we prevent? How can we provide appropriate access to flu vaccines for needle-phobic children?
- Promotion of **pharmacists vaccination** for children 5+ (many families unaware)
- Provide **more accessible locations** for children's flu vaccination eg schools, community sports centres.
- Flu vaccines are **perceived differently** to other routine childhood vaccines. How can we address this?

## Final thoughts about flu vaccine communication to WA families...

- Provide details about how to **access** flu vaccines
- Provide a **clear recommendation**
- Be **reviewed by community** members
- Reinforce the "**social norm**" of flu vaccination for children
- **Timing of flu campaigns should suit families.** Eg "Before the Bugs" (April/May) to maximise flu vaccines before children start contracting winter illnesses, "Back to school" capitalising on increased access opportunities during school holidays, "not too late" in August to remind parents who may have been busy / had sick children during winter that flu vaccines still available and worthwhile.