

Media Release

Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Families & Children
Minister for Youth Affairs



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MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES FOR ALL FAMILIES

A record investment in Victorian Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services is provided in the Andrews Labor Government's *2016/17 Victorian Budget*.

Speaking at the MCH Conference today, Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos announced an investment of \$133 million.

The funding means all Victorian families can continue to have access to a highly qualified maternal and child health nurse, who provides support for a child's health, learning and development, from birth until they go to school. The program also provides parenting support and referrals to other services.

Enhanced MCH services will continue, specifically targeting families at risk of family violence, social isolation and mental health issues. The \$133 million funding covers:

- \$130 million to continue providing high-quality maternal and child health services and meet the needs of a growing population
- More than \$2 million for data management, and to improve communications with parents and translating information into foreign languages.

This comes in addition to key initiatives outlined in the *Roadmap for Reform*, announced earlier this month as a significant overhaul of the child protection system and in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The Royal Commission found the transition to parenthood is a time when women are particularly vulnerable to violence. It noted the critical role of MCH services in identifying and responding to family violence as they see every Victorian family after the birth of a child.

The Budget also includes \$32.3 million for the development of a new, intensive in-home early childhood support service, implementing a key Roadmap initiative. The new service will involve MCH nurses working with social workers and other professionals so that the right help will come as soon as families need it.

The Budget includes \$1.6 million to work with Aboriginal communities to design more culturally responsive and high-quality MCH services and intensive in-home support for Aboriginal families.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos

"This is about giving children the best start and giving families the support they need."

"Maternal and child health services provides essential early intervention, reducing the likelihood of long-term harm and costly interventions later in life."

"The Royal Commission found the transition to parenthood is a time when women are particularly vulnerable to family violence. Maternal and child health services can identify it, and respond to it."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Natalie Hutchins

"Culturally sensitive support for Aboriginal families is so important, particularly when it follows the birth of a child."

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