

Media Release

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CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH

For 100 years, Maternal and Child Health (MCH) nurses have been there for Victorian families and today the service celebrated its centenary at its birthplace in the City of Yarra.

Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos joined MCH nurses and others from across the state to celebrate 100 years of helping Victorian children get the best start in life.

MCH services may have evolved and changed over the past 100 years – but they have always maintained their quality, relevance and place at the heart of Victorian parenting.

The first MCH centre opened in Richmond in June 1917, at a time when a staggering one in ten babies born in Melbourne died.

Today the vital service is funded by the Andrews Labor Government in partnership with local governments as a state-wide, free, universally accessible, health, wellbeing and development service for families with children aged from birth to 3.5 years.

There are now more than 1,100 MCH nurses in Victoria and 662 physical MCH centres, as well as the 24-hour MCH Line phone service that handles more than 100,000 calls a year.

The *Victorian Budget 2017/18* invested \$81.1 million in MCH services and parenting support, including expanding the enhanced MCH Service – a special level of assistance available to families needing the most support.

This followed a record \$133 million investment in the MCH service last year to ensure Victoria maintains a world class MCH Service at a time of increasing population.

The Government is helping more families from more backgrounds access MCH services, recently translating important MCH materials into ten languages as well launching the Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Initiative grants process.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos

“Our Maternal and Child Health nurses are the envy of the world, and reaching 100 is testament to the incredible work that they do.”

“We know the early years can shape a child’s entire life – that’s why our Maternal Child Health nurses are so critical for first time parents. I thank them for their dedication and wish them a very happy 100th anniversary.”

Quote attributable to Member for Richmond Richard Wynne

“More than 1,100 Maternal and Child Health nurses provide invaluable support to parents each and every day. They’ve been a cornerstone of healthcare in Victoria for 100 years.”

Quote attributable to President Municipal Association of Victoria Mary Lalios

“The fundamentals of Maternal and Child Health services have remained the same for a century – to provide a free, accessible service to all families. This is about celebrating this iconic service and the dedicated MCH nurses.”

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