



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Health

Minister Assisting the Prime Minister
for the Public Service and Cabinet

Nicolle Flint MP

Federal Member for Boothby

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government accepts Stillbirth Report Recommendations

The Morrison Government has accepted the recommendations made by the *Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education Report*.

Our Government has agreed to, or agreed in principle to all the recommendations, and our response includes:

- developing a National Stillbirth Action and Implementation Plan in collaboration with state and territory governments and in consultation with bereaved parents, health professionals, researchers, advocacy groups and other stakeholders. The recommendations in the Senate Committee's Report will be central to informing the development of the Plan
- investing in stillbirth research
- developing best practice, culturally appropriate resources for health professionals and parents and families, including more intensive support options for bereaved parents and families following stillbirth
- working with States and Territories to make improvements in several key areas including improving national perinatal mortality data collections, improving access to publicly-funded stillbirth autopsies, building the perinatal pathology workforce, developing more culturally and linguistically appropriate models of care, bereavement support and protocols for public hospitals and community health services.

We thank the individuals and organisations that have contributed to the report, especially those people who have shared their personal stories.

In response to the report, the Government is investing \$52.4 million in perinatal services and support. This will help prevent, reduce and assist the more than 2000 families affected by stillbirth each year.

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

Today we can announce the University of Queensland's Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth will receive \$3 million in research funding for the Australian Safe Baby Bundle project.

This project aims to reduce the rate of stillbirth after 28 weeks gestation by at least 20 per cent, which would save more than 200 Australian babies each year, and will support research to help transition maternity care into routine clinical practice by:

- improving detection and management of fetal growth restriction
- improving awareness and management of decreased fetal movement
- reducing smoking in pregnancy
- improving awareness of a maternal safe sleeping position; and
- improving decision-making around timing of birth for women with risk factors.

On 5 December 2018, as an initial response to the Report, the Australian Government announced \$7.2 million in initiatives designed to reduce stillbirths:

- \$3 million for stillbirth education and awareness programs for women and medical practitioners;
- \$1.2 million to the University of Melbourne for research to minimise preventable stillbirth through the use of biomarkers and ultrasound in late pregnancy; and
- \$3 million for stillbirth research through the Medical Research Future Fund

Supporting bereaved parents is a key component of the Morrison Government's approach to stillbirth. As a second wave response to the report the Government has committed:

- \$43.9 million to support families experiencing grief following the death of a child. Organisations will be invited to apply for grants focusing on perinatal mental health support, perinatal loss and bereavement peer support and perinatal mental health promotion and awareness programs
- in addition to this, Sands Australia will receive funding of \$1.3 million to deliver an intensive support service to families affected by stillbirth. This will commence support while bereaved mothers are in hospital and continue that support when the family returns home.

Reducing the rate of stillbirth in Australia, including providing the best possible support services for families living with the tragedy of stillbirth, is a Morrison Government health and wellbeing priority.

We understand the importance of this issue not only for the women affected, but for their partners, families and the broader community.

The Government's response to the Senate Select Standing Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education Report is being delivered to the Senate Tabling Office this week. Once it is formally tabled in the Senate, the Government's response will be available at www.health.gov.au

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