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## NATIONAL EXPANSION OF INITIATIVE TO REDUCE STILLBIRTH RATES

The Safer Baby Bundle – an initiative to reduce Australia’s unacceptably high rate of stillbirth– will be expanded nationally following receipt of a \$3 million grant from the Medical Research Future Fund.

The program’s aim is to reduce the rate of stillbirth after 28 weeks’ gestation by 20 percent.

The grant has been awarded to the Stillbirth Centre of Research Excellence. The Centre’s Director, Professor Vicky Flenady, has warmly welcomed the decision.

“Federal funding for the Safer Baby Bundle protocol represents a significant opportunity in the fight to reduce the rates of stillbirth in Australia,” says Professor Flenady.

“We now have the opportunity to transform the national conversation and response from personal and family tragedy to public health prevention – and the announcement by Minister Hunt represents a great leap forward.”

The Safer Baby Bundle had already received partnership funding via the National Health & Medical Research Council to enable implementation across NSW, Victoria and Queensland. This funding is going to the development of new eLearning resources and designing new face to face training workshops.

Today’s additional grant of \$3 million means the program can be expanded to reach all jurisdictions and achieve full national impact.

“Stillbirth is far too common – with six Australian babies still born every day, and Australia having a rate significantly higher than comparable countries,” says Professor Flenady.

“Achieving our goal of a 20 percent reduction in the rate of stillbirth after 28 weeks’ gestation will save the lives of more than 200 babies every year.”

The Safer Baby Bundle has five components:

- Improving detection and management of impaired fetal growth
- Improving awareness and management of women with decreased fetal movements
- Reducing smoking in pregnancy
- Provision of maternal safe sleeping advice
- Improving decision-making around timing of birth for women with risk factors.

The protocol is based on proven models from overseas and focused on working with clinicians, expectant mothers and the broader community to achieve outcomes.

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