The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

Nicolle Flint MP
Federal Member for Boothby

MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2019

$26 million for perinatal mental health

The Liberal National Government will support the mental health of expectant and new parents with $26 million for a new Perinatal Mental Health and Wellbeing Program.

The impending birth and arrival of a baby—the perinatal period—brings incredible joy as well as new challenges and responsibilities which can be overwhelming.

Each year, an estimated 100,000 people are affected by perinatal depression and anxiety.

Studies show that up to one in ten women experience depression while pregnant and one in seven women in the year following birth.

Men can also experience perinatal mental illness, with about one in ten expectant and new fathers experiencing depression, anxiety or other forms of emotional distress in the perinatal period.

Appropriate supports for families experiencing grief following the death of a child is an important element in the prevention and early intervention of perinatal mental illness.

This funding will improve the range of services available to better support the mental health and wellbeing of women and families affected by perinatal mental illness, or experiencing grief after the death of a child.

The new funding will deliver innovative screening and treatment approaches, improved access to perinatal mental health support and treatment, and increased community awareness of perinatal mental health issues.

Organisations will be invited to apply for grants for the Perinatal Mental Health and Wellbeing Program. The program aims to fill gaps in services to ensure the right supports are in the right place, at the right time.
Dedicated grants rounds will be available for:

- Perinatal mental health support
- Perinatal loss and bereavement peer support
- Perinatal mental health promotion and training

It will also help to ensure that funded bereavement organisations provide culturally appropriate support and information for bereaved families who have experienced stillbirth, as recommended by the Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education Report.

This funding is on top an initial commitment of $7.2 million for medical research and education programs to address the rate of stillbirth in Australia announced in December last year as part of our Government’s immediate response to the report from the Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education.

The Liberal National Government is prioritising better mental health for all Australians with a record $4.7 billion expected to be spent on mental health this financial year alone.

Our Government’s strong economic management ensures we continue to invest record amounts of funding into vital health initiatives including mental health, life-saving medicines, Medicare and hospitals.

(ENDS)