



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Comprehensive Support for Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Just a Phone Call Away**

The Rudd Government is providing more support for Australian women and their families with a new, expanded national 24 hour Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline commencing on 1 July 2010.

Women, their partners and families will be able to call the Helpline on 1800 88 24 36 for advice and information about pregnancy, birth and the first 12 months of a baby's life.

The Rudd Government is continuing to deliver on an ambitious reform agenda for Australian women and families – with the passage of a historic paid parental leave scheme last week and the landmark \$120 million Maternity Services package.

A strong economy and decisive action during the global financial crisis has enabled these important investments, providing a fairer share and more support for families.

The independent charitable organisation, Royal District Nursing Service Ltd, will provide this free service, offering information and counselling on a wide spectrum of topics relating to pregnancy, birthing and life with a new baby – including issues such as nutrition for mothers and babies, breastfeeding, relationship support and health care options.

The \$17 million helpline will be able to refer to or provide information on other organisations with special areas of expertise, for example the Breastfeeding Hotline, adoption agencies, PANDA, BeyondBlue and Family Planning.

An important new component of this enhanced service is the line will also become a resource for women who experience a loss at this crucial time.

The Rudd Government has provided a further \$5.1 million to help a range of peer support organisations provide services to women and families throughout Australia. These organisations are SIDS and Kids Australia, Bonnie Babes and Small Miracles and Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support (SANDS).

The support and advice these organisations provide to women, their partners and families - often by women who have had a similar experience - is absolutely vital. Peer support services share knowledge and emotional support which can help in trying to cope during such difficult times.

The new grief support available for families is a timely reminder with Friday 25th June as Red Nose Day – one of Australia's most recognised and successful community awareness and fundraising days.

The research into Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), undertaken from proceeds raised through Red Nose Day and from other funding since 1988, has helped save almost 6000 lives. Yet despite this success, there is no known cause of SIDS.

It is therefore important that parents and families throughout Australia have access to quality, evidence-based information as well as the necessary compassion, support and understanding provided by organisations such as SIDS and Kids.

Today I was pleased to be joined by SIDS for Kids ambassador and UNICEF maternity ambassador, Therese Rein, in promoting Red Nose Day in Parliament and launching the new Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline.

**For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220.**