



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

**Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck**

MEDIA RELEASE

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A Better Start to Life to Help More Children Thrive

Thousands more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will be given a better start to life through the further expansion of the Turnbull Government's, New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services (New Directions) program—part of the \$94 million *A Better Start to Life* initiative.

Twelve new sites across the nation are being added to the successful program, taking the total to 136.

“Since it was launched, this unique program has seen significant improvements in the health and wellbeing of participating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children,” said Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt AM.

“New Directions works across the early years of a child’s life, ensuring they are kept healthy and ready to learn when they start school.

“By wrapping services around families, locally focused programs like this are also important in helping guard against the development of chronic conditions in later life, such as rheumatic heart disease and kidney failure.”

The New Directions program targets five priority areas, including:

- Care of mothers before and immediately after birth
- Detailed information about baby care
- Practical parenting, breast-feeding and nutrition assistance
- Monitoring children’s development, immunisations and infections
- Health checks and treatment referrals before children start school

An Australian Institute of Health and Welfare study in 2014 showed that families participating in the New Directions program registered improvements in seven out of the eight national Key Performance Indicators on maternal and child health.

“Mothers participating in *Better Start to Life* have fewer low birth weight babies, higher rates of breastfeeding and very high infant immunisation rates,” said Minister Wyatt.

“We are also seeing women accessing antenatal care earlier in their pregnancies.

“We know that the time from conception through the early years of a child’s life is absolutely critical for their future health and we want to ensure all of our children are given the best opportunities to flourish and thrive.”

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Authorised by Ken Wyatt AM, MP, Member for Hasluck.

The new sites are:

State	Organisation	Indigenous Area
NT	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation	Tennant Creek Town
	Northern Territory Department of Health	Ali Curung
	Northern Territory Department of Health	Alpurrurullam (Lake Nash)
	Northern Territory Department of Health	Atitjere (Harts Range) – Akarnenehe – Engawala (Alcoota)
	Northern Territory Department of Health	Willowra, Yuendumu and Outstations, Yuelamu, Anmatjere
NSW	Bourke Aboriginal Health Service	Bourke
	Pius-X Aboriginal Corporation	Moree Plains
	Dubbo Aboriginal Corporation Health Service (trading as Coonamble Aboriginal Health Service)	Dubbo
QLD	Carbal Medical Service	Goondiwindi- Stanthorpe and Southern Downs
	Galangoor Duwalami Primary Health Care Service	Fraser Coast
SA	Nganampa Health Council Incorporated (APY Lands, SA)	Anangu Pitjantjatjara
WA	Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (CMSAC)	Shark Bay – Coral Bay – Upper Cascoyne