



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

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**\$5.1 Million for Better Support for Women with Post and Antenatal Depression**

The Rudd Government will invest \$5.1 million over three years to enable four specialist organisations to provide telephone-based support for women experiencing post or antenatal depression, or grief following the loss of a baby that will link to an enhanced 24 hour hotline for pregnant women and new mums.

The four organisations are Post and Antenatal Depression Australia (PANDA), SIDS and Kids Australia, Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support (SANDS), and the Bonnie Babes Foundation.

Postnatal depression affects almost 16 per cent of new mothers in Australia, while around 10 per cent of women experience depression during pregnancy.

The new funding will enhance the ability for PANDA to provide support for expecting or new mothers with depression.

In Australia, SIDS accounts for the deaths of more babies aged between one and 12 months than any other known cause.

In 2006, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, there were more than 2,900 perinatal deaths in Australia. In addition, each year many more parents experience the loss of a baby early in the pregnancy. Sadly, one in every four pregnancies ends in a loss from miscarriage and stillbirth.

SIDS and Kids Australia, SANDS and the Bonnie Babes Foundation will receive funding to support women and families who suddenly and unexpectedly lose a baby in the perinatal period, including through miscarriage or stillbirth.

Women who experience post and antenatal depression, and parents and families who have experienced the loss of a baby, often find it helpful to speak to others who have had a similar experience.

Peer support services can be of particular help in trying to cope during such difficult times.

The new funding is in addition to the Rudd Government's commitment to an expanded 24 hour, seven days a week national telephone helpline which starts operation from 1 July 2010. Building on the pregnancy hotline, this helpline will allow a wide range of information, advice and referral services to be provided to women, their partners and families.

The helpline will give an estimated 180,000 women and their families better access to advice and information relating to pregnancy and the demands of a new baby.

The national helpline funding is part of the \$120.5 million commitment announced in the 2009-10 Budget to improve access to maternity services for pregnant women and new mothers in Australia. This package includes support for eligible midwives through access to the MBS and PBS and extra scholarships for GPs and midwives and comes on top of our \$55 million towards a national Perinatal Depression plan which is already providing services to the community.

Providing early intervention and vital support is a key part of ensuring the best possible start in life for young Australians.

This investment builds on the Government's work in the early years including providing over \$100 million to improve Indigenous child and maternal health services and \$2.5 million in funding to help establish a national breastfeeding hotline.

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