



THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

Prime Minister

THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP

Minister for Health and Ageing

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Hearing Screening for All Australian Babies

The Australian Government will seek a commitment from States and Territories to deliver newborn Hearing Screening for all Australian babies from 1 January 2011.

Presently, only 75 per cent of newborns are screened. This varies from over 95 per cent in some States and Territories to less than 40 per cent in others.

Our children deserve better than this.

About 500 children every year are born with a moderate to profound permanent hearing impairment. However, many of these children are not identified until months or even years after birth.

Hearing screening involves a simple, non-invasive test that is relatively quick and easy to perform.

Early detection and treatment of a hearing impairment can be vitally important in a child's ability to develop language skills, in their later education and their employment prospects.

Children whose hearing impairment is detected in the first days of life can be fitted with a hearing device from as early as three months.

The Prime Minister will call on Premiers and Chief Ministers at the forthcoming Council of Australian Governments meeting to fast-track the introduction of universal and standardised newborn hearing screening.

This Government is committed to improving the health of our future generations, and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

With the Government's \$60 billion in public hospital funding to begin flowing to States and Territories from 1 July 2009, this is one of the improvements that Australians can expect to receive.

For all Media inquires please contact the Minister's office on 02 6277 7220.