

Safe and high quality care for Victorian women, their babies and families

Response to the Inquiry into perinatal services

Statement from the Minister

Safe and high-quality care beginning in pregnancy and through the year that follows provides the foundation our children and their families need for a good start to life.

In June 2018, the Family and Community Development Committee tabled its Parliamentary Inquiry into perinatal services Final Report. The Inquiry set out to examine the safety and quality of perinatal services in Victoria.

The Final Report determined that Victoria's perinatal service system generally offers high-quality care. However, it also identified system gaps and areas for improvement, resulting in 86 recommendations.

I would like to thank the Family and Community Development Committee for leading this inquiry, acknowledging their work and the significant contribution made to the inquiry by clinicians, community service providers and importantly, women and families sharing their own experiences of care.

The Andrews Labor Government has long demonstrated its commitment to Victorian women, their babies and families. With implementation of *The Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children*, *The Department of Education and Training 2018-2022 Strategic Plan* and the *State-wide design, service and infrastructure plan for Victoria's health system* underway, our determination to strengthen the care and support available to our women and their families remains.

Together these plans echo a shared commitment to what matters for women, their babies and families – integrated flexible care that begins early and is tailored to their unique strengths and needs.

We have made a number of commitments to Victorian women and families to deliver new and expanded maternity and newborn services in our growing communities and to provide more services and support for new parents and young families.

These commitments include:

- improved nurse and midwife to patient ratios
- transformation of the Geelong Private Hospital site into a Women's and Children's Hospital

- redevelopment of the Frankston Hospital, including new maternity and paediatrics wards, a women's clinic and special care nursery
- \$232 million for a comprehensive package of new parent and early childhood supports, with a focus on sleep and settling and more support for parents.
- creating separate children's emergency departments at five Victorian hospitals, namely Geelong, Maroondah, Frankston, Casey and Northern hospitals.

From 1 January 2019, policy and program management of maternal and child health services will also fall within the Department of Health and Human Services. This change will further enable our work to continue the comprehensive program of investment and reform for safe and high quality care for Victorian women and their families.

The Final Report and recommendations provide valuable insight and advice regarding the system of care so valued by Victorian women and families. The Government is mindful of providing its response to the Final Report in a timely manner, however due to the recent Victorian election and preceding caretaker period, is continuing to carefully consider the report and its recommendations in detail. I look forward to tabling a response to the inquiry by 28 February 2019.

Jenny Mikakos
Minister for Health