

Hon Tony Ryall

Minister of Health



5 May 2011

Media Statement

Budget 2011: \$54.5m extra for mothers, babies

The Government today announced new initiatives for maternity services and to help new mothers and their babies.

Health Minister Tony Ryall says, "It will mean better teamwork and provide extra help to mothers and babies who need it.

"This Government has invested an extra \$1.2 billion in health services over the past two years, and Budget 2011 will provide an extra \$33.2 million for maternity services over four years to improve safety and quality.

"A further amount of \$21.3 million will boost extra WellChild services, with a particular focus on first time mothers.

"We all want the best possible services to protect the safety of mothers and babies," Mr Ryall says. "The additional funding will support midwives, nurses and doctors to improve safety and quality in maternity and WellChild services.

These initiatives extend the Government's work, begun in 2009, to improve the quality and safety of maternity services.

The extra \$33.2 million for maternity service announced today includes:

- \$18.4 million to improve the safety and quality of services for mothers and babies, by bringing all local maternity professionals together for regular clinical reviews of all births. This funding will also increase the number of midwives in hospitals, together with medical specialists on-site and on-call.
- \$6 million to revamp new parent information services.
- \$6.8 million to help vulnerable mothers access a fuller range of health and social services. It will also assist midwives to make appropriate and timely referrals to other practitioners.
- One-off funding of \$2 million to ensure all DHB maternity data is collected nationally.

The \$21.3 million over four years for additional WellChild visits has a particular focus on the needs of first time mothers.

The additional funding is expected to deliver an extra 54,000 visits to around 18,000 mothers who need this additional support. For these mothers, this will mean, on average, three additional WellChild visits up to the first two months of a baby's life.

WellChild currently provides two visits during the first two months of life.

“The Government is committed to giving new mums greater support if they need it, Mr Ryall says. “These three additional WellChild visits will ensure a smoother handover from midwives to WellChild providers and an even better start for mothers and their babies.

“This comprehensive package underlines this Government's commitment to mothers and babies and builds on earlier initiatives in Budget 2009 and 2010,” Mr Ryall says.

In addition to the \$54.5 million in initiatives, \$13 million over four years will fund the needs arising from the rising birth rate.

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