



## Health@Home Plus

PORTFOLIO: HEALTH AND AGEING

### Why is this important?

- Indigenous Australian children have poorer health than their non-Indigenous counterparts across all indicators, with infants twice as likely to be of low birth weight (13%) than babies of non-Indigenous mothers (6%). Infant mortality rates are around 2.5 times those of other Australian children. Indigenous children experience difficulty in accessing pre-school services and child care. Inadequate and early learning experiences lead to poorer educational outcomes. There are increasing rates of substantiated child protection reports, children in out-of-home placements, and exposure to high levels of family and community violence.
- Nurse-led home visiting programmes for mothers and babies are an effective prevention strategy to improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

### Who will benefit?

- From birth to two years of age, all Indigenous children and their families in targeted outer regional and remote areas will benefit from dedicated intensive home visiting services. Those children most in need will also be supported through to the age of eight to help equip them to make a successful transition to school. More than 60 health professionals, including nurses and Aboriginal Health Workers, will be engaged under the measure by year four.

### What funding is the Government committing to the initiative?

- The Australian Government will provide \$37.4 million over four years.

### What have we done in the past?

- This measure will build on the Government's commitment to improving health outcomes for Indigenous Australians, including \$102.4 million provided in the 2005–06 Budget for the 'Healthy for Life' measure to increase the availability of child and maternal health care and to improve prevention, early detection and management of chronic disease. Currently, 80 primary health care services are participating in the Healthy for Life programme through 53 sites.
- Health@Home Plus will complement the Medicare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Health Check, introduced on 1 May 2006 to provide access to comprehensive annual health assessments for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from birth to 14 years of age. In the ten months to the end February 2007, 4171 child health checks have taken place across Australia.

### When will the initiative conclude?

- The initiative is ongoing.