

Get NSW Back in Front



SUPPORTING MOTHERS
AND BABIES

BETTER MATERNITY SERVICES, MORE CHOICE



THE NATIONALS

SUPPORTING MOTHERS AND BABIES

BETTER MATERNITY SERVICES, MORE CHOICE

NSW families deserve the highest standard of maternity services and options that provide them with a range of choices on settings for the birth of their babies. Risks to both mothers and babies must be kept to a minimum and back-up support should be readily available if needed.

Mothers-to-be should also be able to access antenatal care that provides them with information and support in preparing for the birth and post-natal care for mother and child.

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition is committed to providing fully supported birthing services for mothers and their babies so that infants have the best possible start to life.

In government we will provide pregnant women with a range of safe, supportive options when they are choosing where to give birth.

We also acknowledge that, sometimes, new parents will need assistance after the birth of their babies and we will provide support for them during these early stages.

THE NSW LIBERAL/NATIONALS COALITION PLAN FOR BETTER MATERNITY SERVICES AND MORE CHOICE

We will provide more birthing choices for mothers, enabling women to choose to have their babies in a formal hospital setting or more relaxed birthing centre, delivered by doctors and/or midwives with backup of specialist health professionals when needed.

We will provide more resources to assist new mothers who need help settling in with their babies and dealing with health problems of their own, including post-natal depression:

To achieve this we will commit \$23 million over four years including:

- **\$6 million to re-open the Birthing Centre at Nepean Hospital as a Centre of Excellence in Midwifery, including the appointment of a Chair of Midwifery** to assist with the establishment of a midwife led birthing unit within the Maternity Unit, and to ensure a collaborative approach with the existing obstetric unit. The new midwife-led birthing unit will demonstrate the benefits of the long-term relationship between midwife and mother for antenatal to post-natal care.
- **\$8 million to ensure greater use of Early Childhood Centres** by families who most need their services, including more flexible hours of operation, better information and home visiting programs.

- **\$9 million for the Red Cross to extend the Young Women's Health Program**, supporting teenage mothers who are homeless and need intensive support through two new facilities in Nowra and on the Central Coast. We will also investigate with the Red Cross the options for further expansion of this Program to other areas.

Red Cross Australia (NSW) supports 70 young mothers through its Young Women's Health Program. The Program helps teenage mothers under the age of 19 who are homeless or need intensive support. The Program includes up to 12 months accommodation during pregnancy, antenatal and post-natal support, and education for the welfare of both mother and child. The program is open to young mothers from across NSW, but is currently restricted to the eastern suburbs of Sydney, and about 15 people are turned away each month.

These initiatives are in addition to the NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition's commitment to provide **\$4 million to support services such as Tresillian, Karitane and St John of God**, to extend their free telephone and on-line assistance to parents, including mothers suffering post-natal depression¹.

These support services provide extensive advice on issues ranging from settling babies to relationship issues, depression and anxiety. The work of these agencies significantly eases the pressure on thousands of families adjusting to additions to their families each year.

AFTER TWELVE YEARS LABOR HAS FAILED

Over the past five years, NSW has welcomed 85,000 births on average every year².

The NSW Labor Government has been criticised for potentially putting mothers at risk by opening maternity units without appropriate staffing levels. The most tragic example of this has been at the Camden Hospital maternity ward, where 5 day-old baby Natalia Lalic died just days after the March 2003 election due to the failure of Camden Hospital to properly manage complications surrounding her birth at its maternity unit³.

The Camden Hospital birthing unit opened only weeks before the March 2003 election⁴. Evidence revealed at a Parliamentary Inquiry into Camden-Campbelltown Hospitals suggested that the Camden Hospital maternity service, which was opened with great fanfare by the then Labor Premier, "*was opened in response to political pressure, ignoring safety and resource concerns, expressed by staff*"⁵.

The inadequacies in NSW maternity provisions are not confined to a single region with insufficient support for mothers in metropolitan and especially rural locations prevalent as a result of 12 years of Labor Government.

¹ NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition, "[Supporting Country Mothers](http://www.peterdebnam.com.au)", www.peterdebnam.com.au, retrieved Wed 17 Jan 2007.

² NSW Registry of Births Death and Marriages, 'Statistics – Births', retrieved 18 January 2007 from <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/birthsStatistics.htm>.

³ Brogden, John, 'End the lies – Carr must resign', *Media Release*, 21 March 2004.

⁴ Masters, Clare, 'Birth of a scandal as maternity unit shuts', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 16 January 2005

⁵ NSW Parliament Legislative Council, 'Complaints handling within NSW health', *General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2.*, 24 June 2004, p. 78.

COSTING AND FUNDING

	2007-08 \$Mil	2008/09 \$Mil	2009/10 \$Mil	2010/11 \$Mil	TOTAL \$M
Reopen Nepean Hospital Birthing Centre as Centre of Excellence in Midwifery	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	6
Extend Young Women's Health Program to Nowra and Central Coast	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	9
Additional funding for Early Childhood Centres	2	2	2	2	8
TOTAL	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	23

This funding will be provided from cutting identified waste and duplication within the bureaucracy, including a recruitment freeze on Sydney backroom bureaucrats and cuts to government advertising to free up funds to pay for increased frontline services.

This recruitment freeze will free up more than \$4 billion that can be redirected from the backroom to the frontline.