

Minister Geoff Brock

Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Local Government

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Aboriginal birthing program marks 10th anniversary

An Aboriginal Family Birthing Program which is continuing to improve the health outcomes of local women and babies is celebrating its 10th year of operation today.

Speaking at today's anniversary celebration at the Port Augusta Hospital, Regional Development Minister, Geoff Brock said the Anangu Bibi Birthing Program was one of Country Health SA's most innovative and successful programs towards improving the health of Aboriginal South Australians.

"Anangu Bibi started in Port Augusta in 2004 after it was identified that many local Aboriginal women were not engaging with traditional maternity services leading to low birth weights and poorer health outcomes," Mr Brock said.

"The program was designed to support women through pregnancy by bringing together Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Care (AMIC) practitioners, midwives, doctors and obstetricians to provide a specialised birthing service.

"The program has been designed around the key principle of Aboriginal women caring for Aboriginal women, in partnership with midwives, and incorporating the individual cultural needs of each Aboriginal woman.

"Integral to the program is the local AMIC practitioner, an Aboriginal woman who has undertaken qualifications enabling her to provide valuable education and support for expecting mothers who may not feel comfortable or familiar with western health care.

"The AMIC practitioner is linked with an expecting mother from their very first hospital antenatal appointment to birth and eight weeks postnatal ensuring women receive important cultural and clinical support throughout their pregnancy," Mr Brock said.

Since its first days in 2004 the program has grown from initially supporting 20 women to more than 90 women in 2014.

The program has expanded to other country health services, as well as the Women's and Children's Hospital and the Lyell McEwin Hospital in Adelaide.

Port Augusta woman, Caroline Dalgetty has given birth with the support of the Anangu Bibi Birthing Program and has now become an AMIC practitioner to help other women.

"At only 16 years of age for my first birth, I didn't know that there was such a thing as antenatal appointments and I didn't have a program like Anangu Bibi to help me understand this," Caroline Dalgetty said.

"During my second pregnancy, I could not have had a more different experience, as this time I was part of the Anangu Bibi Birthing Program.

“I felt extremely well supported throughout the entire pregnancy and it was a huge comfort to be cared for by another Aboriginal woman.

“I now work in the Anangu Bibi Birthing Program after completing my AMIC qualifications and I love that I can help other Aboriginal women like myself.

“My aim, and that of the entire program, is to support Aboriginal women to have a positive birthing experience and take home a happy and healthy baby.”

Today’s official celebration to mark the 10 year anniversary of the Anangu Bibi Birthing Program is being held in the Port Augusta Hospital foyer from 10.30am.