

Question on Notice
No. 1034
Asked on 2 September 2004

MR PURCELL asked the Minister for Health (MR NUTTALL)-

QUESTION:

With reference to his recent launch of the first phase of the Healthy Hearing Program, how will this program benefit the families in the Bulimba Electorate?

ANSWER:

Implementation of The Healthy Hearing Program is being finalised at the first three sites in Queensland. This includes the Mater Hospital. Full universal hearing screening will begin at that facility from Monday October 4 2004. As the Bulimba electorate is within the catchment of the Mater Hospital, all Bulimba babies born in both the public and private sections of the Mater Hospital will have the advantage of receiving a newborn hearing screening test. This program will ensure early detection of sensorineural hearing loss in babies born in Queensland and also provides reassurance to parents who may be worried about whether their baby can hear. By the end of 2006 all babies born in Queensland will have access to a newborn hearing screening test.

Unmanaged hearing loss in childhood is associated with poor language development and with lower educational achievement and employment opportunities later in life. There is increasing evidence to suggest that early intervention results in improved outcomes for children with hearing loss.

With an investment of about \$22 million over four years, babies in Queensland with hearing problems will have a better future.