

Question on Notice
No. 151
Asked on 6 March 2014

MR HOBBS asked the Minister for Health (MR SPRINGBORG)-

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how many home visits have been undertaken by Queensland Health midwives in the Darling Downs and South West Health Hospital Services areas since the introduction of the government's 'Mums and Bubs' policy, and outline the benefits this program has provided to parents and their children?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Warrego for his question.

The State Government committed \$28.9 million over four years from 2012-2013 to establish an enhanced Maternal and Child Health Service. The Mums and Bubs initiative provides two home visits in the first month of a baby's life. These visits can be followed up with consultations at community centres at key developmental stages, namely, two, four, six to eight and 12 months of age.

The Mums and Bubs initiative was launched in November 2012 and, following a period of building capacity within Hospital and Health Services, reporting on the implementation of the initiative commenced on 1 April 2013.

In the nine months between 1 April 2013 and 31 December 2013 there were 3,366 home visits under the Mums and Bubs initiative in the Darling Downs and South West Hospital and Health Services areas. Across Queensland, in the nine months between 1 April 2013 and 31 December 2013, there were 44,353 home visits.

Home visits are provided by a midwife or a child health nurse and give parents an opportunity to discuss a range of early parenting and child development issues in the comfort of their own homes. These visits include an assessment of the growth and development of the child and the health of the mother following birth. It is also an opportunity to provide accurate information and advice which is tailored to the individual needs and circumstances of the family and can cover a range of issues such as immunisation, safe environments to prevent injuries, parental smoking, breastfeeding and nutrition, the importance of reading to young children, and anticipatory guidance for child health growth and development.

Home visiting programs have the potential to improve parental-child relationships and help parents adjust to their new roles. The Mums and Bubs initiative also facilitates connection with other service providers for children and families who may require further assessment, intervention, referral and/or support.

There is compelling international evidence on the social and economic benefits of investing in the early years of life. The Queensland Government believes that providing families with access to enhanced maternal and child health services will improve the health, development and wellbeing of children and give much needed support for new families.