MINISTER FOR HEALTH

TWENTY YEARS OF STRONG WOMEN PROGRAM

28 August 2013

A Territory-developed program that provides culturally focused health care to Aboriginal women and their babies has turned 20, with a special ceremony marking the occasion at Parliament House this evening.

Health Minister Robyn Lambley welcomed ‘Strong Women’ workers from Darwin, Alice Springs and remote communities across the Territory to celebrate this significant milestone for the ‘Strong Women, Strong Babies, Strong Culture’ program.

“It has been an honour to host ‘Strong Women’ workers both past and present, and to celebrate the program’s 20th anniversary,” Mrs Lambley said.

“These women are responsible for this program’s success, providing vital support for mothers and their babies through a strong focus on culture and community.”


The program was introduced in 1993 following a study which indicated that close to a third of all infants born in three Top End communities of Milingimbi, Galiwin’ku and Wadeye were underweight.

“In two decades, the program has grown from the three remote communities identified in the study, to a network of 18 ‘Strong Women’ workers across the Top End and seven in Central Australia as well as six coordinators,” Mrs Lambley said.

The program has expanded from its original focus on improving nutrition, emotional and social wellbeing; to now include the prevention of chronic conditions from before and after birth and addressing social and environmental issues faced in remote communities.

“The community-led model that is so integral to this program has opened the way for excellent community participation and engagement,” Mrs Lambley said.

“Our ‘Strong Women’ workers and ‘Strong Women’ coordinators deserve our congratulations and gratitude because it is their hard work and dedication that has seen this program grow from strength to strength.”

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