



## Improving Indigenous birthing services

Good maternal health, strong local support networks for the birthing mother and her newborn, and a sense of connectedness to land and culture were all identified as critically important at a roundtable on birthing services for Indigenous women.

The roundtable was conducted by the House of Representatives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee. The Committee was interested in the challenges faced by Indigenous women who must travel from remote communities to regional centres to give birth, and the current services, or lack thereof, available to support them.

Participants in the roundtable discussion included representatives from the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses, maternal and child health nurses and midwives who have worked in remote and regional centres around the country.

Committee Chair, Ms Janelle Saffin MP said, “The ATSI Committee hopes the transcript of the roundtable discussion sheds some light on current birthing experiences of Indigenous women across Australia, so that the Parliament can respond appropriately.”

“The Committee has written to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to request a reference for an inquiry into Indigenous birthing be sent to the House Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee of the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament. We recognise we cannot bind the 44th Parliament but the case is so compelling we must place the committee's request on the record for consideration.”

For a copy of the transcript of the roundtable discussion, see the Committee's website at [www.aph.gov.au/atsia](http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia) or contact the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 4559**.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair Ms Janelle Saffin on 0418 664 001 or the Committee Deputy Chair Dr Sharman Stone on (03) 5821 5371. **For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au)