

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 5 July 2018

STILLBIRTH FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA CALLS FOR NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO SAVE MORE LIVES

Federal health policy has failed families who have experienced stillbirth and a comprehensive roadmap is needed to address a crisis that has seen six babies stillborn every day for too long.

That's the view of Stillbirth Foundation Australia, which has used its submission to the Senate Inquiry into Stillbirth Research and Education, to call for a **National Action Plan for Stillbirth**.

The Foundation has highlighted medical practitioner education, public education, research and data collection as four key areas that must be addressed in a comprehensive way.

"It is frankly a disgrace that six children are stillborn each day in Australia and that has largely remained unchanged for years," Foundation CEO, Victoria Bowring said.

"Serious action must be taken to save more lives.

"Too often we see inconsistent medical care, a lack of awareness in the community, not enough coordination and investment in research and poor data collection and management.

"This has to change and it has to be addressed in a comprehensive way, not with piecemeal approaches.

"That's why the Stillbirth Foundation is calling for a National Action Plan for Stillbirth."

This approach would see the Federal Government partner with organisations like the Foundation, bereaved families and experts, to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing stillbirth.

An Action Plan would deliver a coherent policy roadmap that sets out priorities, has measurable targets and the necessary funding behind it.

The Foundation recommends the establishment of this Action Plan be initiated as soon as possible, and that it set out specific goals including:

- Development of resources for medical professionals (recommendations 1.1, 1.2);
- Development of community educational resources (recommendation 2.1);
- Development of an ambitious research strategy (recommendations 3.1, 3.2); and
- Improved data processes (recommendations 4.1, 4.2)

"Australia should be ambitious in how it addresses this scourge of stillbirth, and the Foundation believes a National Action Plan for Stillbirth is the optimal approach," Bowring said.

"We have seen a similar approach recently with the National Action Plan for Endometriosis being developed by the Federal Government, and a similar model could work for stillbirth."

The committee is to report on or before the second Senate sitting Thursday of 2019.

To find out more about the Inquiry visit:

www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Stillbirth_Research_and_Education/Stillbirth

To find out more about Stillbirth Foundation Australia visit: www.stillbirthfoundation.org.au

Media contact: Phil McCall 0438 619 987