

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 04 July 2019

LATEST REPORT SHOWS STILLBIRTH RATES HAVE NOT CHANGED IN 20 YEARS

In a report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) today, the latest statistics show that the stillbirth rate in Australia has basically not changed in decades, showing that 2,100 babies died of stillbirth in the year 2015, and another 2,100 died again in the year 2016.

Stillbirth Foundation Australia CEO, Kate Lynch, says in Australia six babies are stillborn every day and up to a third of these stillbirths are preventable with the right education programs and national health campaigns.

“The hard truth is that the national stillbirth toll dwarfs the national road toll, and if this report is not a call to arms for governments, policy-makers and the medical profession, I don’t know what is,” said Ms Lynch.

“The ground-breaking Senate Inquiry into Stillbirth Research and Education made strong recommendations last year, providing a roadmap to reduce the rate of stillbirth by 20 per cent over three years.

“While we look forward to the Government’s response to this Report and continuing discussions with policy-makers, we welcome the Government’s announcement today of additional funding of the Medical Research Future Fund.

“When it comes to stillbirth, there are things we know that can reduce the rate of stillbirth but are not reflected in current advice or medical practice, and there are things that only further medical research can reveal.

“Australia is not doing enough and can do better than this. Our stillbirth rate is much higher than that of other countries such as the UK and New Zealand.

“Stillbirth rates are still significantly higher amongst Aboriginal people, and people in rural and regional areas, and we can do better than that too.

“One thing that we can do is donate.

“A large amount of the funding for education of parents and medical research is done by organisations like ours, representing families of stillborn kids trying to prevent the tragedy happening to someone else.

“Education of parents, medical professionals and policy makers, and funding medical research, are all expensive, and we would welcome support to make worthy investments into saving kids’ lives,” she said.

The foundation said there were relatively simple steps expectant mothers could take to improve their chances of having a healthy delivery.

Ms Lynch said, “our advice to pregnant women is that they should go to sleep on their side from 28 weeks of pregnancy onwards, and pregnant mothers should seek immediate healthcare professional advice if they notice changes in their baby’s movements.”

For more information: stillbirthfoundation.org.au

Media contact: Phil McCall 0438 619 987
A Stillbirth Foundation Australia spokesperson is available.