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## **Health Budget sets a positive tone for future ongoing investment**

The National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG) has welcomed the 2017 Budget for its focus on health initiatives, in particular the positive measures for women's health which NASOG has been advocating for.

President of the professional body for women's health specialists, Dr Gary Swift, said the Budget decision to lift the Medicare rebate freeze for all doctors, including specialists, was a pragmatic and necessary move.

"It is disappointing that the lifting of the freeze is not being implemented immediately but NASOG believes that the decision paves the way to rebuild a solid health investment platform for the future," Dr Swift said.

Dr Swift said other positive measures in the Budget for women's health included post-natal depression funding being increased as part of an \$80 million mental health package.

"Peri-natal mental health has been a key area of work for NASOG and this funding will help to address what is a very serious health problem in the community," Dr Swift said.

Dr Swift said the removal of the so-called zombie Budget measures from the 2014 Budget had finally removed threats to cut paid parental leave, providing a level of certainty for expectant parents.

"Other measures we applaud in the Budget include the additional funding in public hospitals and also the retention of the current safety net provisions," Dr Swift said.

"The commitment of the Government to see all children immunised has been underscored by the allocation of \$5.5 million over three years for an awareness campaign to encourage parents and carers to have children under the age of five vaccinated, with the goal of having all children vaccinated by the time they start school.

"This is a great policy initiative that benefits the whole community."

Dr Swift said the Budget reflects the women's health advocacy work undertaken by NASOG.

"We have had very positive interactions with the Minister for Health Greg Hunt and are delighted that our views have been reflected in these very positive measures for improving women's health.

"We congratulate Minister Hunt on this Budget and look forward to continuing to work closely with him and the Government to further improve women's health in Australia."

**For all Media Inquiries**, please contact NASOG CEO Caroline Khalil on 0400 101 109.