



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Health

Reference: 250220 Social Policy - Health

Hearing: 20 February 2025

In relation to: Health - Infant Program

Question received: 24 February 2025

Answer Due: 3 March 2025

The government's new INFANT program is being delivered in Belconnen, Gungahlin, Molonglo Valley and Tuggeranong. Why is this program not available to people in the electorate of Kurrajong?

Are there plans to address this gap?

MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

In September 2024, the ACT Government commenced a pilot the INFANT (INfant Feeding, Active play and NuTrition) program in the ACT. INFANT is an evidence-based health literacy intervention developed by Deakin University. It works with parents and caregivers to promote healthy eating, physical activity, and reduced screen time for babies from birth until two years of age. INFANT is supported by 15 years of research by Deakin University.

The pilot is being delivered by a community organisation, Capital Region Community Services, and is being evaluated to determine the effectiveness and potential upscale of INFANT in the ACT. As a pilot, INFANT is delivered in limited sites. These were determined using Australian Early Development Census data, which identified areas of Canberra with the highest percentage of developmentally vulnerable children in 2021. This was overlaid with available data on the regions with the highest registered births in the ACT.

INFANT aligns with the *Best Start for Canberra's Children* – the ACT Government's first 1000 Days Strategy – by promoting active play, physical activity, healthy nutrition for infants, and by supporting breastfeeding and ensuring food environments are healthier to reduce the impact of overweight and obesity. It also supports the first goal of the strategy to increase community awareness of the importance of the first 1000 days.

OFFICIAL

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Stephen-Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Date:

3/3/25

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith