



# Media Release

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**JENNY MACKLIN MP**

**Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services  
and Indigenous Affairs**

**SID SIDEBOTTOM MP**

**Member for Braddon**

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## **A better start for Indigenous children in Smithton**

The Australian Government is delivering on its commitment to provide support to Indigenous children and their parents by extending funding for a successful playgroup in Smithton.

The Smithton playgroup has been running since March 2009 and provides support to about 30 local Indigenous parents and their children.

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, today announced Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation would receive \$93,275 to continue running the playgroup in 2010-11.

Minister Macklin said the playgroup had helped build stronger families in Smithton.

“Playgroups are fun, and help children develop social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills,” Ms Macklin said.

“For the first time local children will be able to learn through play-based early childhood development activities, including music and singing, imaginative play, art and craft, word games, story telling, outdoor and free play.

“Playgroups also give parents, grandparents, and carers the opportunity to establish important social and support networks to help improve their parenting techniques.”

The Member for Braddon, Sid Sidebottom, said he had visited the Smithton playgroup last year and had seen the benefits first hand, through the reactions of some of the children involved.

“We want to build close family ties in Smithton and support parents to raise their children in safe, happy and strong families,” Mr Sidebottom said.

“This playgroup gives young children and their families the opportunity to spend time together having fun, interacting and learning with each other.”

The Smithton playgroup was established under the Australian Government's \$13.8 million *Expansion of Playgroups for Indigenous Families*, a four-year program to support 36 playgroups across regional and rural Australia.

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