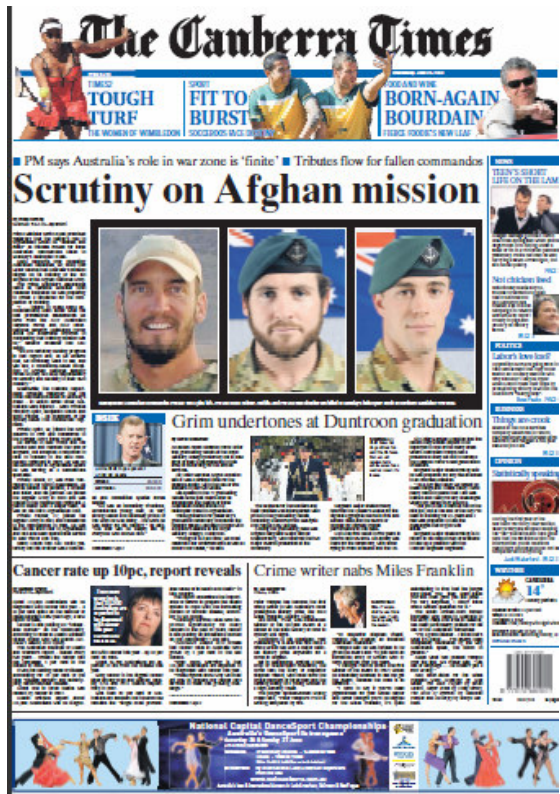


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# Have fun, be silly – and save babies’ lives

By David McLennan

SIDS and Kids is urging Australians to have some fun, be a bit silly and raise money for medical causes through Friday's Red Nose Day.

Red Nose Day ambassador Therese Rein hosted a morning tea with the Puggles playgroup at Parliament House yesterday to promote Friday's fund-raiser, which has the theme "roar like a red nose di-nose-aur".

SIDS and Kids Australia chief executive officer Leanne Raven said the money raised from Red Nose Day supported the organisation's work in saving the lives of babies and children during pregnancy, birth, infancy and childhood. The organisation also supports bereaved families, including through the Puggles playgroup and its peer support program.

"We have a lot of volunteers who have experienced the death of a baby or a child, and they give back to the organisation and support others who have similar experiences, and that is what the playgroup is about. It's

about bringing people together and allowing people to express their grief in a way that is of benefit to them," she said.

Erin Nugent is a SIDS and Kids peer supporter and her children, Lachlan Nugent, 3, and his sister Keira, 2, of Duffy, are part of the playgroup.

"It is a great support for the kids growing up with other children who also have brothers and sisters who aren't with us, and they can grow up with people who have some slight understanding, as well as the mums being able to go in there and say, 'I'm having a bad day'..."

SIDS and Kids supported her after her first child, Byron, was stillborn in 2005, and she now helps others through similar difficult times, offering "empathy and not sympathy".

Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon used the occasion to launch the Government's new Pregnancy, Birthing and Babies helpline, which offers advice to expectant and new mothers and families.

The \$17 million helpline –

1800 882 436 – will be run by the Royal District Nursing Service and take calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week from Thursday next week.

It will offer advice, or referral to more specialised services. "We know that women and their families, their partners, parents, children, often want information:

"Is it safe to drink during pregnancy?"

"What are my options with midwifery care or GP care?"

"How do I get help if I am feeling depressed?"

"Is it normal to be having floods of tears with a new baby and do I need help?"

"What are the right sleeping strategies we should use to make sure our children are protected as much as they can be from sudden infant death syndrome?"

"All of these questions can be either answered by the helpline or a person can be referred through to another specialised service," she said.



THE NOSE HAVE IT: Therese Rein gets into the swing of fund-raising for Red Nose Day, launching a Pregnancy, Birthing and Babies helpline at Parliament House. Photo: GARY SCHAFER