MEMO:

Date: 10.9.2015
To: Birthing services and Koori Maternity Services managers and clinicians across Victoria
From: Maternity Services Education Program
Aim: To clarify the use and purpose of cot cards (seen in Figure one) distributed with Aboriginal Newborn Identification Project Resources in March 2015.

Cot cards are to be offered by clinicians in birthing services, only to women with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander babies.

Purpose of cot cards:

- To prompt maternity care clinicians to check the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status of babies before issuing cot cards and to ask the standard Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status questions if baby’s status is unknown.
- To prompt clinicians to offer care according to individual needs and to offer referral to Aboriginal health services, where available within the service and/or externally.
- To celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander babies born in maternity services across Victoria.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families have higher rates of low birth weight, perinatal mortality and morbidity and five times higher rates of SIDs. Appropriate support and referrals can help families to achieve the best outcomes for their baby.

As the primary purpose of cot cards is to support improving culturally safe care in birthing services, KMS teams will not offer women cot carts during pregnancy care, but will let women know that there will be cot cards available for their babies in the hospital once baby has been born.

If a woman does not receive a cot card, the KMS team will:

1. Ask the woman if she was offered a cot card.
2. If yes, enquire as to whether she refused the cot card.
3. If no, feed back to the birthing service that a cot card was not offered, enquire as to why and check that the Aboriginal status of baby is correct in the data collection system.
4. If the woman would like a cot card and there are significant barriers to her obtaining one from the birthing service, the KMS team will offer the woman a cot card.