



Speech by

**Mike Horan**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

Hansard Wednesday, 11 October 2006

---

## **TOOWOOMBA SOUTH ELECTORATE, BIRTHING FACILITIES; YOUNG WOMEN'S PLACE**

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (9.16 pm): One of the choices that should be available to young mothers and families in the birthing of their babies is a model of care based upon the services of an experienced midwife. It is an important choice. A good target would be that at least 10 per cent of mothers should be able to have that choice. There were a number of recommendations in the rebirthing report that was delivered to Queensland Health some time ago. Many of those recommendations have not yet been put in place.

The issue I want to speak about tonight is the need for a family birthing centre at the Toowoomba Base Hospital. It is one of the bigger hospitals in Queensland. Large numbers of babies are born there. Queensland Health has been so slow in developing this midwifery model of care.

We heard a speaker tonight talk about \$1 million being allocated to the Townsville Hospital birthing unit. It is important that Toowoomba, as a major regional centre, get adequate funding to not only institute this model of care but also provide the necessary facilities. It is quite a simple facility. It is a family-friendly room that provides the environment for that model of care. For births assessed as low risk, this is a very safe way and happy way for young mothers to have babies. Because the facility is in a major hospital, if a complication arises—it is an unlikely event because they have been assessed as low risk—the mother can receive attention quickly. I call on the Minister for Health to step in and have a look at what is holding things up in Toowoomba. Why have we been unable to get this birthing unit?

The other thing I want to talk about is Young Women's Place in Toowoomba. It provides a marvellous service for young women who are in very vulnerable circumstances, particularly very young girls who get pregnant and face difficult circumstances, be it violence, drugs or family background. They virtually come in off the street. One of the success stories of Young Women's Place was the provision of funding for a midwife. That has just been taken away. It has been an ongoing battle to get continued funding for this service. I want to keep fighting for it. The service needs to be maintained and the funding maintained.

I have talked to some women who are marvellous examples of being helped by Young Women's Place to have their babies and get their lives back on track. Some are now on P&Cs, happily married and having other children. It has been wonderful. Because of their vulnerable position they will only go to Young Women's Place. They will not go to the hospital because it is too daunting. Because of their circumstances they need this service. I urge the minister when he meets with the group next week to give this every consideration. It is a wonderful service.