



Speech by

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IPSWICH HOSPITAL MIDWIFERY MODEL OF CARE

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (7.26 pm): Ipswich is undergoing a baby boom with an increase of around 25 per cent in the number of births at the Ipswich Hospital over the past 18 or so months. From December, the city's expectant mothers are to have a new option for their maternal care. The Ipswich Hospital has recently called for expectant mothers hoping to give birth with minimal use of drugs and intervention to put up their hands to be the first participants in the new midwifery model of care.

The midwifery model of care is a tremendous innovation for which I have campaigned for a few years now. It draws on the best of this ancient and very important profession. Under the model, expectant mothers who enrol in the program will get to know a midwife in the months before their child's birth. That midwife will then deliver their child and go on to provide postnatal care for a couple of months until finally handing over to the child health nurse. By enrolling now with the first births expected in December, the expectant mother and her partner or support person can get to know the midwife well so that when they come to hospital they are not dealing with a room full of strangers. As I said, the midwife will then stay in touch with the mother and the new child for six to eight weeks afterwards.

The midwifery model of care will provide a more personal service but, with women still giving birth in the Ipswich Hospital's modern maternity unit, all the best of medical care will still be on hand. With the rate of caesarean births in Australia standing at nearly 30 per cent—that is twice the World Health Organisation's recommendation—and with Queensland Health quoting the average cost of a caesarean at \$7,000 compared to \$3,000 for a natural birth, there are clear advantages in offering women the midwifery model of care. Importantly, the model has been developed through partnership with midwives, mothers and the hospital's obstetricians and is supported by all.

At first, the pilot will be staffed by three full-time midwives but it is hoped that if the pilot is successful the number of staff will grow. I commend Teresa Walsh, a former Ipswich Hospital midwife and now professional officer at the College of Midwives, for her development of this model and ongoing championing of it, just as I commend the Director of Nursing, Colleen Glenn, and all staff involved. The introduction of the midwifery model of care is an exciting step for the women of Ipswich.