




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Maternity Services

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.10 am): I have been clear that as the Minister for Health and the Minister for Women, women's health is one of my top priorities. All women in Queensland should have access to high-quality care close to home no matter where they live. That is why on my first full day as health minister I travelled to Gladstone and Mackay to meet with mothers who have been impacted by maternity services. Joined by the member for Gladstone, I had a chance to sit down with Jemma, Coco and Marlena to discuss the importance of local birthing services close to home.

I also visited the Gladstone Hospital and met with new parents and frontline staff in the maternity ward. I met Jessie, Ben and their beautiful baby daughter, Thea, who was born at the hospital just the day before our visit. I want to thank Jessie and Ben for introducing me to their little baby girl and I hope they are settling into their new life well. Christina, one of our incredible midwives, was also there providing support to the new parents.

Our health workers are committed to supporting us which is why I am committed to supporting them. Although these challenges are not unique to Queensland, we know that our maternity services are facing challenges, especially in regional and rural areas. That is why we set up the Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme to attract healthcare workers to our regions. As the Premier said yesterday, we have had almost 700 inquiries, which is great news for Queensland. However, we know there is more to do.

In the coming weeks I will be holding a statewide maternity services round table with the federal government to discuss solutions for our regional communities. This round table will bring together a mix of key health professionals and consumer groups. It is vital that the federal government is also extended an invitation because this is not just an issue for Queensland. I am pleased to see that Queensland will lead the way, and I have already spoken with the federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney, to discuss what more we can do in this space.

I am excited that Queensland will lead the discussion about how we can strengthen maternity services across the country. I look forward to updating the house as this work progresses and ensuring that we are providing the people of Queensland with calm and considered facts and ideas as well as support our women with health care close to home.