




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Maternity Services

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.51 am): I have made it clear that one of my top priorities is ensuring all women in Queensland have access to high quality care close to home, no matter where they live. I am very pleased today to inform the House that the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service has reinstated its full birthing services at the Gladstone Hospital. I thank the hardworking staff at the Gladstone Hospital and acknowledge all of the women who campaigned for local birthing services in their community. I also want to acknowledge the member for Gladstone who has advocated tirelessly on this issue.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Butcher interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Gladstone!

Ms FENTIMAN: I also want to acknowledge the former health minister, the member for Redcliffe, who worked to reintroduce these services. On my first full day as health minister, I travelled to Gladstone—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on a matter of privilege, something arising. I believe the member for Gladstone did an unparliamentary gesture towards the member for Callide.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I will hear the point of order in silence. Manager of Opposition Business, I was paying particular attention to the member. I did not see such a gesture. I think there is no point of order.

Ms FENTIMAN: On my first full day as Minister for Health, I travelled to Gladstone to meet with mothers impacted by the disruption of birthing services at the hospital. I particularly want to thank Jemma, Coco and Marlena for sharing their experiences with me and the member for Gladstone. Extensive work has been undertaken to recruit qualified medical professionals to cover vacancies, while also building a framework that will deliver safe and sustainable long-term solutions for maternity care right across Central Queensland. Following the recruitment of additional obstetrics and gynaecology specialists, all expectant mothers with moderate-risk pregnancies, being 37 weeks or more gestation, can give birth in their local community. I know this return of birthing services to Gladstone comes as a great relief for many expecting mums and their families.

Last week I was joined by the member for Cook to announce \$42 million to support rural maternity services. This funding will allow the expansion of outreach maternity services to help reduce the need for expecting mums to travel to larger centres. It will provide funding for the Flying Obstetrics and

Gynaecology Service based out of Roma to continue its vital work. This funding is building on the learnings from the Rural Maternity Taskforce, addressing concerns raised in the Women's Health Workforce Forum by expecting mums and healthcare workers. We are putting money on the table to develop place-based solutions because what will work for Cooktown will be different to what works in Chinchilla.

I look forward to discussing these matters at our maternity round table on Friday. I am looking forward to being joined by the federal Minister for Health, Ged Kearney, to have this important discussion. The challenges being felt by maternity services across the state are not unique to Queensland, but I am excited about Queensland leading the conversation nationally about how we can strengthen maternity services.