




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) (9.52 am): Every Queensland woman deserves safe, compassionate and comprehensive maternity care. That is why today is such a momentous day for mums and bubs in Queensland. After years of campaigning by our incredible frontline midwives, I am pleased to announce that we will be introducing a bill to create midwife-to-patient ratios in our public maternity wards. In an Australian-first, we will count the babies as patients. We know how hard our midwives work to provide world-class care to our mums and bubs. Today, the introduction—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, Minister. Member for Scenic Rim, member for Warrego, member for Mudgeeraba and member for Nanango, you are all warned under the standing orders.

Ms FENTIMAN: Today, the introduction of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will recognise their hard work. Under our proposed changes, the minimum ratio will be one midwife to every six patients, including babies. This will mean that mums and bubs receive higher quality care, and midwives will not be tasked with unmanageable workloads.

We know that ratios work. Queensland was the first state to introduce nurse-to-patient ratios back in 2016 after the LNP refused to vote for them. Research has shown that Queensland's nurse-to-patient ratios led to lower mortality and readmission rates and shorter lengths of stay and gave nurses more time to detect changes in patients' conditions. Nurses have reported better job satisfaction and less burnout, while patients were more likely to recommend the hospital to family and friends. Now we are extending this to our midwives. I am so proud that we are listening to and delivering for frontline staff and Queensland mums and bubs.

Our government also has a strong track record, unlike those opposite, of empowering a woman's right to choose. The bill I introduce today will also take steps to improve access to termination-of-pregnancy services by allowing appropriately trained nurses and midwives to administer drugs such as MS-2 Step. We know that women still face barriers to accessing termination services, particularly in rural and remote Queensland. Access to these services should not depend on a woman's postcode. Allowing nurses and midwives to administer medical termination drugs will mean greater choice for women, particularly when access to surgical termination is not available. This government will always defend a woman's right to choose. We know that those opposite will not, which is why we are taking this important step.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to remind all members and their staff that COVID boosters will be available for free today at the QUT Medical Centre, so if members can get down there during their lunchbreak, boosters will be available. The Chief Health Officer has said this week that, whilst COVID cases are beginning to stabilise, it is so important that everyone remains up to date, so if you are due for a booster please head down there on your lunchbreak. Keep yourself and your community safe.