




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) (9.39 am): Queensland women deserve access to high-quality, reliable birthing services closer to home. That is why our government is investing \$42 million for regional, rural and remote maternity services. Because of this investment, we are expanding midwifery-led models of care and expanding virtual care to provide clinicians in rural and remote hospitals with 24/7 access to specialist advice.

We are working with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to support GPs and rural generalists to complete an advanced diploma of obstetrics. We are also providing incentives for rural GPs to undergo anaesthetics training. Unlike what those opposite would have us believe, when it comes to challenges in maternity services in our regional communities, there is no one silver bullet, but we are making the investments our system needs to futureproof birthing services over the coming years.

Today I can announce that, as part of our Women and Girls' Health Strategy, we will be investing a further \$4.4 million to deliver even better care for mums and bubs here in Queensland. We heard from almost 12,000 women and girls who made it clear that they wanted safe and reliable birthing services. We heard firsthand from women who had experienced care and procedures conducted without informed consent. That is why part of this new funding will go towards better births with consent workshops to promote a deeper understanding of respectful, trauma informed maternity and birthing care among doctors and obstetricians.

We will also provide the opportunity for rural and regional midwives to develop their skills through rotations at the Mater Hospital in Brisbane. These rotations will offer hands-on experience and exposure to complex patient care, and our funding will cover travel, accommodation and backfill costs to ensure frontline services are not impacted. We will deliver additional workshops for regional, rural and remote healthcare workers in neonatal stabilisation, because a mother's postcode should not determine how safe birthing services are. This is just one more example of our government investing in the healthcare needs of women and girls here in Queensland through our nation-leading \$1 billion Women and Girls' Health Strategy.