



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

---

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Maternity Services**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.20 am): I have made it clear that one of my top priorities is ensuring all women across Queensland have access to high-quality, reliable maternity services, no matter where they live. It has been reported today that the Mater Private Hospital Redland is proposing to move its birthing service to the Mater Mothers' in Brisbane. The Mater has stated that this proposal has been driven solely by the need to maintain safety.

While Mater is a private facility and this is not a Queensland Health decision, I do appreciate the concern the local community will have about the impact. I am advised that a majority of Redlands women who give birth with the Mater already elect to do so at Mater Mothers' in Brisbane, so birthing has continued to decline at the Redland private hospital.

Last financial year, for every one birth at the Mater Redland private facility, there were 23 births at Redland and Logan public hospitals which means that any increase in demand at our local public hospitals will be extremely marginal.

I understand that despite proposing to cease private birthing services at Redland, Mater remains absolutely committed to the local community. I am advised they intend to utilise their facilities for increased elective surgery or other procedures that will mean more private patients in the Redlands will receive care closer to home.

I am committed to improving maternity services for all Queensland women and recognise the importance of women feeling respected, supported and valued throughout their pregnancy and birthing journey. We were the first government in Australia to count the babies as part of midwife-to-patient ratios to better support our hardworking midwives. Through our \$42 million rural maternity package, we are investing in a range of initiatives to better support care close to home. This includes supporting GPs to upskill to become GP obstetricians. Travelling across the state, I have had the pleasure of meeting with some of our incredible doctors, including Dr Katherine Bird in Townsville and Dr Ivan White in Rockhampton who are both currently undertaking this training that the Queensland government is paying for.

We have also established Australia's first role of Chief Midwife and, just today, the first Maternity Expert Stakeholder Group will meet for the first time.