

Question on Notice
No. 1043
Asked on 8 June 2006

MS LEE LONG asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the continuing serious shortage of obstetrics specialists in our Queensland public hospital system—

Will he advise on the success of the midwifery model of maternity care at the Mareeba Hospital and are there any plans to expand this model to other parts of the State in the near future?

ANSWER:

In June 2005, due to unsuccessful attempts by the Tableland Health Service District to recruit medical officers with the necessary procedural skills, the District established a midwife-led model at Mareeba Hospital. This has run as a pilot rural hospital site based on evidence offered by the recent report of the review of maternity services in Queensland.

A six-monthly review of the service and birthing data, including referrals and transfers to Cairns, has indicated that the midwife-led model at Mareeba Hospital offers a safe and sustainable birthing option for women with low-risk pregnancies.

A commitment was made to all stakeholders that a comprehensive review of the new model would be undertaken after 12 months of operations to:

1. Determine whether the midwife-led model of care offers a safe and sustainable maternity service for the hospital; and
2. Assess whether this model can be modified for use elsewhere in rural Queensland.

The Terms of Reference for the review are under development and an expert review team is currently being established to conduct the review in the next couple of months.

The review will include interviews with staff, consumers, general practitioners and obstetric staff of Cairns Hospital. The results of the review will be available to the Mareeba community as well as other Districts looking at options for maternity care.