

Question on Notice

No. 714

Asked on 25 May 2023

MR B HEAD ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to maternity services in Biloela, Chinchilla and Gladstone—
Will the Minister (a) outline all requirements to restore these maternity services, including specific staffing needs, facility upgrades, funding and other resources, (b) commit to restoring these services to their full, prior capacities and capabilities and (c) outline what dates all these services will be returned, or declare them permanently closed if unable to do so?

ANSWER

Queensland Health remains committed to safe, accessible maternity services for all Queensland mothers and babies.

Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service (HHS) obstetric specialists work in a collaborative manner across hospitals, and staff often move between sites to support their colleagues. The Central Queensland Maternity Care Network has been implemented to create a resilient, sustainable birthing service across Central Queensland.

Central Queensland HHS has recruited suitably qualified specialist workforce to sustainably support full birthing services at Gladstone Hospital. On 12 June 2023 all expectant mothers with low-risk pregnancies, being 37 weeks or more gestation can give birth at Gladstone Hospital.

Birthing Services at Biloela Hospital continue to be impacted by medical specialist vacancies. The birthing service at Biloela Hospital is provided by General Practitioner Anaesthetists, General Practitioner Obstetricians and midwives. The health service has recruited a long-term General Practitioner Anaesthetist however, there remains a gap of four days in each fortnight in the General Practitioner Obstetrics roster. Recruitment efforts are ongoing and birthing services at Biloela Hospital will be reinstated when it is safe to do so.

Since 1 August 2019, all women in Chinchilla and surrounds, who wish to access public obstetric services, have been part of an all-risk Midwifery Group Practice that provides all antenatal and postnatal care in the local community with birthing in Dalby or Toowoomba / Brisbane dependent on risk profiles. Since the inception of the Midwifery Group Practice Model of Care the service has operated continuously without interruption.