

Question on Notice

No. 846

Asked on 14 June 2024

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

QUESTION

With reference to births registered at Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg and Dalby Hospitals—

Will the Minister advise the number of born before arrival births in 2023 and 2024 to date by (a) month, (b) postcode of parent and (c) whether the birth happened in the company of an ambulance, in a private residence or in private transit?

ANSWER

One of my top priorities is ensuring all women in Queensland have access to high-quality, reliable maternity services close to home, no matter where they live. The Miles Government has committed \$42 million over four years for maternity services for women living in regional, rural and remote Queensland. This funding will enable Queensland Health to strengthen maternity models of care and support Hospital and Health Services to provide safe birthing services. This investment will also assist in attracting and retaining clinical staff.

In response to the request for born before arrival for (a) month and (b) postcode of parent at selected hospitals, the following information includes the number of born before arrival births recorded at Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg and Dalby hospitals between January to December 2023 and year to date January to March 2024*. Due to the small number of born before arrival births, in order to maintain patient confidentiality, data are provided by hospital, month and postcode separately.

Less than one percent of births across these locations were born before arrival in the relevant period. This is consistent with statewide trends.

These locations account for 6 percent of all born before arrival births in Queensland in the relevant period. For comparison, South East Queensland accounts for 67 percent of all born before arrival births in Queensland in the relevant period. This is consistent with the percentage of total births occurring in these areas.

Bundaberg Base Hospital reported 11 born before arrival births between January 2023 and March 2024. These occurred during January, March, May, June, July, September and December 2023 and in January 2024. These mothers have a postcode of usual residence of 4621, 4625, 4660, 4670 or 4671.

Dalby Hospital reported 1 born before arrival birth between January 2023 and March 2024. The mother has a postcode of usual residence within the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (HHS).

Gladstone Hospital reported 6 born before arrival births between January 2023 and March 2024. These occurred during March, May, July and October 2023. All mothers are reported with postcode of usual residence of 4680.

Rockhampton Hospital reported 16 born before arrival births between January 2023 and March 2024. These occurred during February, March, May, July, August, October and December of 2023 and in February and March of 2024. These mothers have a postcode of usual residence of 4701, 4702, 4703, 4713 or 4714.

A born before arrival birth is counted where a birth occurs before arrival at hospital or birth centre for planned hospital or birth centre births. They are also counted where a birth occurs before the arrival of a midwife for planned home births.

Babies born before arrival to hospital can occur for several reasons such as an increased chance of a fast labour for mothers having their second or subsequent birth, delays in onset of travel to hospital and delays due to not recognising signs of labour. Awareness of these issues is included in prenatal care to promote the minimisation of born before arrival births.

The Perinatal Data Collection (PDC), which is held centrally, does not specify where a born before arrival birth occurred, therefore part (c) cannot be provided by the Statistical Services Branch, Department of Health. While individual hospitals may collect information that indicates where a born before arrival birth has occurred, that information is not part of either the Queensland Health PDC or Perinatal National Minimum Data Set. In order to provide this information, each hospital would be required to access their own data individually which is an unreasonable diversion of resources.

*Notes on data

1. Source: Queensland Perinatal Data Collection, Statistical Services Branch, Department of Health, Queensland
2. Data from January 2023 are preliminary and subject to change.
3. The Queensland Perinatal Data Collection includes records of all live births and stillbirths of at least 20 weeks gestation and/or at least 400 grams in weight in Queensland public and private hospitals or delivered elsewhere in Queensland outside of hospital.
4. While the mother's postcode of usual residence is known, the mother's location prior to travelling to the hospital when the BBA occurred is not known within the Perinatal Data Collection and may be different to her postcode of usual residence.