

MEDIA RELEASE

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World Premmie Day celebrated at Toowoomba Hospital SCN

World Prematurity Day was celebrated around the globe on 17 November. Wendy Carlish, Associate Nurse Unit Manager at Toowoomba Hospital's Special Care Nursery (SCN), said the day was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the prevalence of preterm birth.

"Worldwide one in ten babies is born prematurely," Ms Carlish said.

"We have around 50 admissions to the Special Care Nursery each month and while not all babies who come through the SCN are born prematurely, a large number are.

"At the moment of the nine babies in the SCN, eight were born prematurely.

"Having a baby preterm can be very challenging for parents, because the expectation is that the baby will be born and then the family will leave hospital together within a few days.

"In cases where babies are born nine or ten weeks premature, that can mean the baby has to stay in hospital for up to two months, so that's a very big adjustment for the family."

Toowoomba mother of three Lydia Tuapola has had a lot to contend with since her daughter Gloria was born in Brisbane at 31 weeks and two days, weighing just 1.6 kilograms.

"It was all new for me, and very scary, but I have had to be strong for her, and be there for her all the way," Ms Tuapola said.

"It was really hard and it breaks my heart seeing her with all these wires and everything on her but she's in good hands.

"It was harder when she was in Brisbane but I'm more confident now, because I'm closer to her, and the nurses here are looking after her really well."

Ms Carlish said Lydia and Gloria's journey was one taken by countless families around the world.

"That's why we come together on World Prematurity Day," she said.

"We get together with the parents to have some morning tea, celebrate the day and let them know we're on that journey with them, and we will help them every step of the way."

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