MEDIA RELEASE

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More maternity choices for Goondiwindi women

The women of Goondiwindi and surrounds now have more choices when it comes to safely delivering their babies in their home towns.

Thanks to an initiative between the local GP Obstetricians, hospital midwives and mothers, pregnant women who have previously undergone one caesarean section now have the option to try for a vaginal birth with their subsequent child.

Previously all women who had experienced a caesarean section were advised to either travel away from home to have a vaginal birth after caesarean (commonly known as VBAC) in Toowoomba or Brisbane, or opt for another caesarean in Goondiwindi.

Hospital midwife Kerryanne Maddox said the new agreement was wonderful news for local women.

“We looked at the reasons why VBAC wasn’t offered in Goondiwindi and looked at other small, rural hospitals similar to our facility, to see how they were doing it,” Ms Maddox said.

“There were a lot of robust discussions about offering this service and after two years of consultations, it has resulted in two successful VBACs at the hospital in two weeks.”

Ms Maddox said the hospital was proud to work with the local community and other health care workers to provide quality care to residents.

“Goondiwindi is a passionate community with residents who want to see more local services offered here. And we are proud to be able to safely offer another medical service, which is available in larger centres, locally,” she said.

Local mother Reacheal Sheridan successfully delivered her daughter, Annalise, via VBAC on Tuesday 18 October at the Goondiwindi Hospital with the help of her caseload midwife Rebecca McCosker.

“My first baby, Cooper, was in a breech position and even though the midwives were amazing and we tried to turn him, it wasn’t to be, and he was born via caesarean section,” Mrs Sheridan.

“I wanted a VBAC this time around. And it was a really nice experience; to walk out of the labour ward with your baby in your arms is special.”

At all stages of her pregnancy, Mrs Sheridan said she felt supported by the midwives and doctors.

“I felt they were all on my side, as long as myself and the baby weren’t in danger, they did everything in their power to support my decisions.”
Local GP Obstetrician Dr Sarah Gleeson was involved in the consultations to establish the provision of VBAC services at the hospital.

She said a working party looked at VBAC procedures and policies outlined by Queensland Health and sought advice from senior obstetricians across the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service to develop their own set of local guidelines and eligibility criteria.

“The Goondiwindi Hospital is a low-risk birthing facility so there is quite a specific set of criteria used to ensure that we can be confident that we are selecting the right woman to go down this path,” she said.

“The most important issue however is, and will remain, the safety of the baby and mother.”

Dr Gleeson said women were becoming better informed about maternity choices and sought out care that aligned with their wishes.

“We are so thrilled that we can give eligible women this opportunity and choice,” she said.

“It has been received well locally as more women learn that VBACs are offered at the hospital.

“If we continue to have good patient selection and a committed team made up of midwives, GP Obstetricians and GP Anaesthetists, then the hospital will be able to continue to offer VBACs into the future.”

Goondiwindi Hospital VBAC eligibility criteria includes:

- Patient has had only one previous caesarean, which was at least 18 months ago
- The baby needs to present head first (known as cephalic)
- Appropriate growth and measures of foetal wellbeing are achieved
- Signed consent
- There are also further criteria about induction, progress of labour and the monitoring of the baby and mother during labour.

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Photo caption: Parents Reacheal and Michael and son Cooper with new daughter Annalise who was delivered by VBAC at the Goondiwindi Hospital recently.

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