



# Maternity and neonatal care

Queensland is supporting mothers and babies through world-class training and care.

**Queensland Health**

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Australia

# Maternity and neonatal care

In 2016, there were 62,779 births in Queensland\*. Queensland has a strong maternity care system as evidenced by innovative examples of best practice maternity and neonatal care and low perinatal and maternal mortality rates.

A growing number of service providers are committed to more effectively responding to women's needs and expectations, and are ready to innovatively address challenges. In addition to highly trained obstetricians, Queensland mothers are supported by midwives, nurses and allied health professionals.

\*Chief Health Officer's Health of Queenslanders 2018 report

## Queensland offers three levels of public maternity care including:

**Midwifery led care** – mothers can choose to have continuity of care with a midwife or small team of midwives either at their local hospital or at a community clinic. A midwife is a qualified and highly skilled health professional, educated and committed to providing woman-centred holistic care, education, advice and support to the mother and her family during pregnancy, labour, birth and the early postnatal period. Midwives consult and collaborate with the wider health team according to the woman and baby's health needs.

**General Practitioner (GP) shared care** – mothers can choose to be cared for in the community by their GP. The mother will then give birth at the local hospital's maternity ward supported by the on-staff midwives and obstetric staff.

**Specialist care** – women with pre-existing health conditions or where problems develop during pregnancy will be offered specialist care in hospital.

All levels of care have access to obstetricians and other specialist doctors if required. Mothers may also choose to be cared for by a private midwife or a private obstetrician at their own cost.

## Queensland Maternal mortality rate (MMR)

Number of deaths per 100,000

AUS

6

USA

14

UK

9

**The Queensland MMR for the 3-year period 2013–2015 was 5.9/100,000.**

Overall, Australia's MMR is 6/100,000 births. In comparison, the MMR in the United States of America was 14/100,000 and the United Kingdom was 9/100,000.

These results provide evidence of excellence in maternal care.

World Health Organisation,  
2015 interactive map data.





## Queensland offers a number of vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate training programs in nursing and midwifery

Queensland has an enviable reputation in nursing and midwifery education and training stemming from its vibrant university and vocational education and training (VET) sectors. VET nursing education is delivered online with residential schools featuring access to clinical skills simulation facilities and clinical placements. TAFE-trained nurses are able to work as enrolled nurses and can gain credit towards a Bachelor of Nursing degree. Undergraduate nursing and midwifery education takes a narrative and inquiry-based approach to learning and integrates online and lecture-based study with clinical placements in major hospitals and community health centres.

### Vocational

- TAFE Queensland (enrolled nurse)
- Mater Education (enrolled nurse)

### Undergraduate and postgraduate

- Griffith University, School of Nursing and Midwifery
- James Cook University, School of Nursing and Midwifery
- Queensland University of Technology, School of Nursing

- The University of Queensland, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work
- University of Southern Queensland, School of Nursing and Midwifery
- University of the Sunshine Coast
- CQUniversity
- Australian Catholic University, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine
- Queensland Health, Cunningham Centre

## Queensland Maternity and Neonatal Clinical Guidelines

Queensland Clinical Guidelines (QCG) were established in 2008 with the vision to translate evidence into best practice. The guidelines are used every day by clinicians including doctors, midwives, nurses and allied health staff such as physiotherapists and social workers to help guide their practice. Additionally, the guidelines may be referred to when Queensland Health is reviewing a clinical incident.

Queensland's clinical guidelines for maternity and neonatal care can be accessed at

[www.health.qld.gov.au/qcg](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qcg)

# Midwifery and nursing capability examples

## Midwifery and Nurse Navigator Program—a new model of care

Midwife and Nurse Navigators are a team of registered health professionals who provide a service for patients with complex health conditions and need a high degree of comprehensive clinical care, often across the healthcare system. There is expected to be 400 Midwife and Nurse Navigators working in Queensland Health by 2019/20.

The Midwife and Nurse Navigators:

- use a multi-disciplinary approach to monitor high needs patients, identify actions required to manage their healthcare and direct patients to the right service, at the right time and in the right place
- provide a central point of communication and engagement to ensure optimal care and coordination of services along a patient's healthcare journey
- educate and help patients to better understand their health conditions and enable them to self-manage, participate in decisions about their healthcare and improve their own health outcomes.

## Midwifery Continuity of Care

The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service Midwifery Group Practice provides a Continuity of Care Model for pregnant women prior to and through pregnancy, as well as for women and their babies after birth. The adoption of this care model has resulted in fewer days spent in hospital, with 46 per cent of women discharged within 4–6 hours compared to 0.8 per cent for standard care births. Currently, this model is being expanded across the Gold Coast.

The focus for the Continuity of Care Model is on women, family and community. Services are provided close to or within women's homes, freeing up hospital staff and beds at the Gold Coast University Hospital.

## Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital's (RBWH) Centre for Advanced Prenatal Care

The Centre for Advanced Prenatal Care provides support for women with complex pregnancies. It empowers informed decision making to achieve the best possible outcomes for mothers and babies and offers the following services:

- State of the art ultrasound facilities
- Midwifery support
- Fetal monitoring
- Genetic counselling and fetal MRI (via the Department of Medical Imaging).

## South West Hospital and Health Service (HHS) Midwifery Caseload Model

South West HHS covers the area from east and north of Roma to the Northern Territory, South Australia and New South Wales borders. It has four hospitals, seven multipurpose health facilities and a range of smaller community clinics. All women are cared for within the midwifery caseload model of care.

Midwives have an allocation of women within a geographical area for whom they provide continuity of care during the antenatal, intrapartum and postpartum period. The midwives work with pregnant women in a partnership model with two or three other midwives to provide optimum care. All pregnant women also have three routine medical consultations with a rural generalist with obstetric credentialing at 20, 36 and 40+ weeks. There is additional consultation via telehealth and with the Flying Obstetric Service where necessary.

Outcomes have included increased maternal satisfaction, an increase in spontaneous vaginal birth and breastfeeding rates, with a decrease in preterm labour and postnatal depression.

# Queensland capability examples



## Birth centres

To complement the 41 maternity sites in Queensland, seven birth centres are available across the state. Birth centres are staffed by midwives working within midwifery group practices where the woman has the same midwife or small group of midwives providing care across the continuum of her pregnancy, labour and birth, and into the postnatal and early parenting period.

## Mater Mothers' Hospital

[www.matermothers.org.au/hospitals/mater-mothers-hospital](http://www.matermothers.org.au/hospitals/mater-mothers-hospital)

Jointly funded by Queensland Health and Mater Group, Mater Mothers' Hospital (MMH) offers both public and private maternity and neonatal care. MMH provides full service maternity care including Queensland's first purpose-built 24/7 Pregnancy Assessment Centre providing expert care for women experiencing complications from day one of pregnancy to six weeks after birth.

MMH have established a world-class service in Maternal Fetal Medicine to provide expert diagnosis and management of complex pregnancy problems. Mater's Centre for Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) is at the forefront of developing innovative technologies including open maternal fetal surgery for spina bifida and fetal laser therapy.

More than 2000 seriously ill and premature babies from across south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales require the specialist life-saving care provided at MMH Neonatal Critical Care Unit each year.

These babies are cared for by a team of expert specialists, neonatologists, nurses, midwives, and allied health professionals within one of Australia's largest Neonatal Critical Care Units.

Mater Baby Products are developed and used by Australia's largest and trusted maternity hospital, MMH. The high quality, safe and trusted Australian hospital products are developed specifically for the health and wellbeing of newborn babies and mums.

## Queensland Cord Blood Bank

[www.matermothers.org.au/services/queensland-cord-blood-bank](http://www.matermothers.org.au/services/queensland-cord-blood-bank)

The Queensland Cord Blood Bank, located at the Mater, is a part of AusCord, the Australian Network of Cord Blood Banks. Cord blood is the blood left behind in the umbilical cord and placenta after a baby is born. The cord blood is rich in blood stem cells that can generate all blood cell types. It can be used in transplantation to treat many serious blood and related disorders such as leukaemia, immune disorders and bone marrow failure in children and adults.

Cord blood donated to an AusCord public cord blood bank is made available to all patients in need of a blood stem cell transplant in Australia and overseas.

## Neonatal Retrieval Service

[metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/healthcareservices/neonatal-retrieval-service-neoresq](http://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/healthcareservices/neonatal-retrieval-service-neoresq)

Neonatal Retrieval Service (NeoRESQ) supports regional centres in Queensland and northern New South Wales to transport premature or critically ill babies for life-saving treatment at a tertiary care centre, meeting their needs via road ambulance, helicopter or fixed wing aircraft.



# Midwifery and nursing capability examples

## Neonatal care

The neonatal period is generally defined as the first 28 days of an infant's life. Queensland Health offers a range of neonatal care from well-infant care to highly specialised care. This includes care for sick, low birth weight and/or premature infants, and/or infants born with congenital conditions or other conditions affecting their health and survival.

Queensland has a number of tertiary referral centres for newborns throughout the state, including the RBWH, MMH, the Townsville Hospital Neonatal Unit, the Gold Coast University Hospital and the Queensland Children's Hospital.

## Queensland Milk Bank

[metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/healthcare-services/milk-bank](http://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/healthcare-services/milk-bank)

The Queensland Milk Bank is the largest and fastest growing milk bank in Australia, providing donated breastmilk to preterm or unwell babies across Australia. Breast milk increases the survival rate of premature babies by almost 70 per cent. Some mothers may not be able to breastfeed or express milk to feed their premature or sick newborns due to low supply or maternal illness. The next best thing is breast milk donated by other mothers. The service helps reduce the length of hospital stays and improves the survival rates of preterm babies.

The Queensland Milk Bank screens, processes, and distributes pasteurised human milk to meet the specific medical and nutritional needs of seriously ill newborns.



# Queensland perinatal research capabilities

## Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth

[www.materresearch.org.au/Our-research/Research-programs/Mothers-babies-and-women-sheath/Centre-of-Research-Excellence-in-Stillbirth](http://www.materresearch.org.au/Our-research/Research-programs/Mothers-babies-and-women-sheath/Centre-of-Research-Excellence-in-Stillbirth)

The Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth, within Mater Research Institute—The University of Queensland, focuses on stillbirth prevention through a better understanding of causal pathways and risk factors. This national consortium, led by Queensland researchers, aims to reduce stillbirth rates, improve care for parents whose child was stillborn and lead research that translates into improved clinical care, community awareness and outcomes.

## Perinatal Research Centre

[perinatal-research.centre.uq.edu.au](http://perinatal-research.centre.uq.edu.au)

The Perinatal Research Centre (PRC), within The University of Queensland and co-located with RBWH, is committed to improving perinatal health through world class biomedical and clinical research. The multidisciplinary research team aims to translate research advances into clinical practice and better health outcomes for mothers and babies.

The PRC specialises in translational research from pure science to playing a key role within RBWH in clinical trials. These trials have not only been instrumental in improving care of mothers and babies at RBWH but also nationally and internationally.



## Promoting breastfeeding

Breastfeeding gives babies the best start for a healthy life and has benefits for the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies.

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until babies are around six months of age, with the introduction of appropriate complementary feeding (foods and drinks other than breastmilk) at this age, in addition to continued breastfeeding to 12 months and beyond, for as long as mother and child desire.

Queensland Health has published a number of resources to support mothers to breastfeed, supported by the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy. The strategy recognises the biological, health, social, cultural, environmental and economic importance of breastfeeding.

All health workers have a responsibility to encourage, support and promote breastfeeding according to these recommendations.

## Partner with us

Queensland Health, through the Health Innovation, Investment and Research Office, is looking for opportunities to collaborate with government agencies, entrepreneurs, industry and research institutions to expand our vibrant health sector to improve the wellbeing and healthcare of Queenslanders.

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