



**Queensland
Government**
Queensland Health

The changing pattern of birthing in Queensland hospitals between 1987 and 2006

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This report documents some of the shifts in age and choice of hospital of birthing women in Queensland which have occurred during the last 20 years. This information was extracted from Queensland Health's Perinatal Data Collection which stores information on every reported birth in Queensland since 1987.

Figure 1 shows that while the number of women electing to be treated as public patients in public hospitals has risen steadily from 20,936 in 1987 to 37,156 in 2006, the number electing private care in public hospitals has declined from 10,714 to 1,306 over the same time period. The number of women birthing in private hospitals has more than tripled from 5,726 in 1987 to 17,206 in 2006.

Figure 2 shows that all of the growth in birthing in Queensland has occurred in the over 30 age group, where the number of births has increased from 11,354 in 1987 to 27,528 in 2006. The total number of births to women under 25 years of age, and 25-29 years, has remained constant or fallen during the past 20 years.

Figure 3 shows a series of leaps in private hospital use by birthing women who are 30 or more years of age. One step occurs around 1994-95 and another around 2001-02. The proportion of under 25 year olds birthing in private hospitals started at 9% and then declined throughout the period.

The trend in use of private hospitals for first births (not shown) is similar to that shown in Figure 3 for women under 25 and 25-29 years of age. For women 30 years and older, when only first births are considered, the increase in use of private hospitals is even more dramatic, with over 54% of first births occurring in private hospitals since 2001.

Figure 1. Chargeable status of women birthing in Queensland hospitals, 1987-2006.

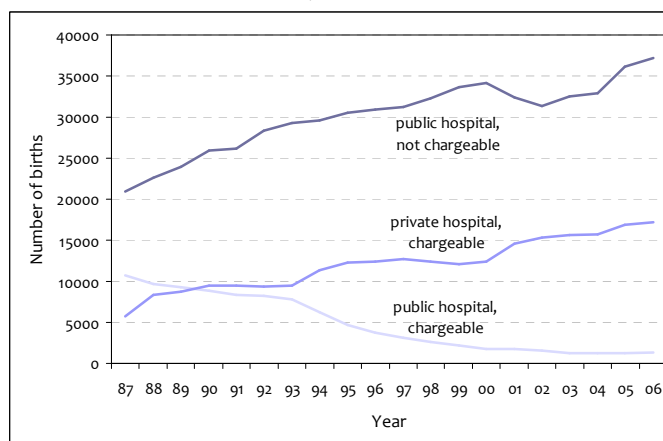


Figure 2. Age category of women birthing in Queensland hospitals, 1987-2006.

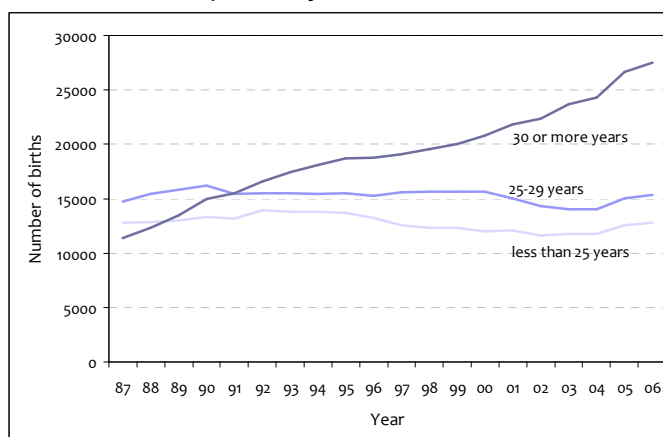


Figure 3. Percentage in private hospital for women birthing in Queensland hospitals, 1987-2006.

