

Director-General Statement

Toowoomba Hospital Maternity Assurance Review

On 9 February 2026, I commissioned an independent assurance review of Darling Downs Health's Toowoomba Hospital Maternity Services, in response to concerns raised regarding the consumer experience and complaints handling.

The assurance review was undertaken by a panel of independent experts. It assessed and reported on the response of Darling Downs Health to 117 recommendations made following five previous reviews and investigations into maternity services since 2018, in addition to evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of maternity complaints processes.

Consistent with the terms of reference, the assurance review did not assess individual complaints or clinical incidents, noting the established pathways for raising and addressing these concerns are already in place, either directly with the Darling Downs Health, or through independent options, including the Office of the Health Ombudsman.

The assurance review is now complete. I acknowledge the active contribution from consumers and staff during the assurance review and thank the reviewers for their work on this matter.

The reviewers made several key findings including:

- Substantial reform activity in response to the recommendations from the previous five reviews is underway and is wide ranging, comprehensive and appropriately targeted to the issues identified.
- Reform activity is early in its lifecycle and the initiatives that underpin the reform agenda are not yet embedded into routine practice.
- Darling Downs Health has an established consumer complaints framework supported by policy, legislation and governance mechanisms however consumer feedback and an analysis of complaints responses identified improvement opportunities.

The reviewers also recognised several reform initiatives that are already underway within the Darling Downs Health, such as:

- Strengthened clinical and executive leadership oversight, including the establishment of the Maternity Services Oversight Taskforce, providing clinical and executive leadership and ensuring clinicians have a stronger contribution to safety and quality oversight in the service.
- Reforming maternity care delivery to align with continuously evolving best practice.
- Investment in workforce and implementation of workplace cultural reform including mechanisms to improve open communication and engagement between staff from all professional groups.
- Working with consumer representatives to develop an improved Consumer Engagement Plan.

Opportunities identified by the reviewers to strengthen the complaints process and support community confidence in maternity outcomes are being considered and progressed by the Darling Downs Health as a matter of priority.

Queensland Health values the opportunity to improve its processes and services, and I thank staff and consumers for their participation in the assurance review.

Dr David Rosengren

Director-General Queensland Health