

Media statement

25 November 2019

Helping families through the grief and loss of stillbirth

Every day in Australia, six families face the reality of their baby being stillborn and this is often a profoundly heartbreaking experience.

Staff at Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service's (SCHHS) Women's and Families Service strive to provide support to parents and families as they grieve the death of their baby. Midwives are one of the key healthcare providers, alongside other multidiscipline staff members, who offer support to mums and dads and help them to create memories that can be cherished for a lifetime.

Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH) now offers a Bereavement Room in Birth Suite, for women experiencing a stillbirth. Some women may require alternative pain relief during labour that can only safely be facilitated in the birth suites. There was a clear need to provide an environment suitable to care for these families, which complimented the already successfully established Butterfly Suites on the Maternity Ward.

The Bereavement Décor Resources that Birth Suite have adopted, allow the birthing room to be transformed into a calm, quiet and safe space, focusing on individualized, holistic care. The environment created assists with privacy and promotes an environment where women can feel safe to labour and spend time with their baby. Families can access all the additional services and clinicians who are available for help and guidance during their stay.

Clinical midwife Hannah Stone said: "The Bereavement Décor Resources allow the midwives to create a warming space in very little time, if the situation requires. We know women labour optimally when they feel safe, and the decor in the room assists in creating an environment that feels private and sensitive."

"The location of the Bereavement Birth Suite Room is vital, as it allows for a separate area to be created to promote quiet and calmness. An additional room can also be set up next door, known as the 'Family Room' to allow loved ones to visit and sit in comfort together.

"We are also extremely fortunate to be able to provide families with a beautiful memory box kindly donated by Precious Wings, a charity organization who assist in supporting families and clinicians in creating lasting memories at such a time of uncertainty and loss," she said.

"Heartfelt Photography also very kindly offer their services to families on birth suite, to come and take precious photos of your baby and loved ones if requested.

"No two mothers, fathers or families will experience grief and loss in the same way and by having a space that promotes quiet and calm, tenderness and empathy, a place to listen and grieve without time constraints is so important. Creating the opportunity for families to spend precious moments with their special babies immediately after birth, slowing trying to grasp

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the here and now, can in some small way help them to face the devastation of losing a baby,” Ms Stone said.

“Our philosophy is to provide all parents and families an exceptional level of care, compassion and support and the time to make truly informed decisions that are best for them. We hope that by promoting a holistic multidiscipline approach to care, we can in some small way help to support these families face the future once more.”

For more information and support regarding stillbirth, visit:

- [Coping with stillbirth](#) – Queensland Health
- [Red Nose Grief and Loss](#)
- [Sands](#)

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Interview and photo opportunities will be available with Clinical midwife Hannah Stone.

WHEN: Tuesday November 26, 9am

WHERE: Sunshine Coast University Hospital, meet at Main Reception

ENDS

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