



12 November 2014

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Mothers congratulate hospital on new birth care option**

Australia's leading maternity consumer organisation, Maternity Choices Australia (MCA), today congratulated the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) for giving Brisbane mothers the option of birth care in hospital with a private midwife.

Women will now be able to access Medicare-rebatable care from private midwives in the community, with access to hospital for private birth care with their midwife.

MCA President Leah Hardiman said "This is great news for northside Brisbane women. Hospital access for private midwives will enable women to employ a midwife who can provide pregnancy care in their community, birth care in their local hospital, and postnatal care at home."

Credentialling Medicare-eligible midwives at public hospitals is a key priority of the National Maternity Services Plan. The establishment of this new option at RBWH coincides with the 4 year anniversary of the commitment made by all the State and Territory Health Ministers on 12 November 2010 to implement the National Maternity Services Plan.

Since 2010 Queensland has led Australia in implementing the Plan. Seven other public hospitals, all in Queensland, have opened their doors to Medicare eligible private midwives: Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Nambour, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Redlands and Logan Hospitals.

Maternity Choices Australia estimates that each birth with a private midwife saves the State Government up to \$2,000. Over 1,000 women in Queensland having birthed with private midwives since Toowoomba Base Hospital credentialed the first Medicare-eligible midwife over three years ago; this represents a saving of up to \$2 million for the Queensland State Government.

"This is an option all women should have access to. We encourage all hospitals to put the systems in place to give the full range of maternity care choices to women in their communities" said Leah Hardiman.

Contact: Maternity Choices Australia Queensland Spokesperson:  
Belinda Barnett 0404 460 503 [b.barnett@maternitycoalition.org.au](mailto:b.barnett@maternitycoalition.org.au)