



4th November, 2014

MEDIA RELEASE

GOLD COAST UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL LEADING THE WAY IN MATERNITY CHOICES FOR FAMILIES

Australia's leading birth care consumer organisation, Maternity Choices Australia, advises that nearly 200 women have birthed at the Gold Coast University Hospital with their own chosen private midwife since the hospital opened its doors to more maternity care options for Gold Coast families.

It's one of only a handful of hospitals in Australia that have implemented key strategies from the National Maternity Services Plan, agreed by all of Australia's health ministers in 2010. Other hospitals will be scrambling to reach the November 2015 target of ensuring all women have this option of maternity care.

Maternity Choices Australia President and mother of two, Leah Hardiman, said her organisation applauds Gold Coast University Hospital for leading the way.

"Women really want this type of care – to be able to choose their own private midwife who will care for them throughout their pregnancy, at hospital during labour, and afterwards at home with a newborn."

"Women who have chosen this option would recommend it to others, and feel supported by their midwife regardless of how their baby is born. This isn't about 'natural birth' versus other births, which is often how discussions about birth take place in our communities. This is about women and their families feeling supported and properly cared for; receiving the right care at the right time in the right place."

"Childbirth is a time of extremes – of joy, of tiredness and for some of us, vulnerability. Having the chance to form a relationship with a care provider helps women to ask questions that matter to them, without feeling pressured about a busy waiting room full of other expectant mothers."

Only Toowoomba Base Hospital, Bundaberg Base Hospital, Nambour Hospital, Ipswich Hospital, Redlands Hospital and Logan Hospital have opened their doors to Medicare-eligible privately practising midwives. The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Brisbane is set to have all documentation signed off in the next couple of days.

Maternity Choices Australia welcomes the chance to work with other hospitals around Australia to make this option available to their community by this time next year as outlined by the National Maternity Services Plan.

Ms Hardiman said, "There are clearly benefits for everyone; the women, the community, the midwives and the hospital. We estimate that each hospital birth with a private midwife saves the hospital between \$1000 - \$2000."

Photo and interview opportunity is available with mothers, midwives and midwifery academics. For further information please contact Leah Hardiman 0427 474 099.