

Rural Doctors welcome maternity funding as ‘positive start’

The Rural Doctors Association of Queensland (RDAQ) has welcomed today’s State Government budget commitment of \$42million to improve maternity services in rural and remote communities.

RDAQ President and Rural Generalist Obstetrician Dr Matt Masel said the organisation had long advocated for rural women to be able to give birth safely as close to home and on Country as possible.

“Today’s announcement is an indication that our members’ voices are being heard,” Dr Masel said.

“RDAQ has been advocating for this type of injection, particularly into the Flying Obstetrics and Gynaecology (FOG) Service, for a long time so support like this is extremely welcomed,” he said.

“The important thing now is to learn more about, and provide feedback on, how this money will be used to ensure the greatest outcomes for rural and remote women and communities.

“Reproductive and maternity services, including safe access to contraception, termination, pregnancy care and birthing, are fundamental for all. They form a core service in rural areas which support the provision of broader surgical, emergency, and generalist services. None of this is optional,” Dr Masel said.

“It was fantastic to have Health Minister Shannon Fentiman address our delegation to rural doctors from across the state at our annual conference in Cairns last night and to hear her specific commitment to creating positive change in rural birthing.

“We’re looking forward to attending the Minister’s round table discussion next week and discussing how this funding can and should be used to best serve rural and remote Queenslanders.”

RDAQ released its [Rural Maternity Services Policy Statement](#) in March, affirming the need for collaborative care models as crucial in addressing the growing maternity care crisis across the state.

On addressing the delegation, Minister Fentiman gave her commitment to advocate on behalf of rural doctors and continue to engage directly with RDAQ and its members, saying she hoped maternity services would be her legacy area.

“I’m very passionate about strengthening maternity services,” Minister Fentiman said.

“I genuinely want to hear from you, work with you, and collaborate with you to strengthen, particularly rural and remote locations, and I think if I can make some positive change in that space, I will feel like I’ve made a difference,” she said.

“Events like this conference, and organisations like RDAQ, are essential in the promotion and advocacy of the work of doctors in rural and remote settings. I want to extend my thanks for the work you all do, you are valued, you are needed, and you are respected.”

There is a full conference Rural Maternity Services Plenary scheduled for 9.10am tomorrow discussing the future of Queensland’s rural maternity services.

RDAQ2023 is on from 8 to 10 June at Cairns Convention Centre. Full program - [HERE](#)