

## Frequently Asked Questions Mackay HHS Obstetrics and Gynaecology Investigation

### What has Mackay HHS done in response?

The Chief Executive established a feedback line on 12 October and encouraged women to come forward.

The line is staffed with an experienced midwife. We are also providing support to women who have identified immediate needs.

The Chief Executive has also commissioned an independent investigation under Part 9 of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 (Qld), which is entirely independent of Mackay HHS.

There are four investigators appointed – three are clinical experts in their respective fields of gynaecology, obstetrics and midwifery and the fourth is an experienced consumer representative.

We have also set up emotional and psychological support in place for women who have contacted the feedback line and who wish to receive these supports.

### What supports are available?

Mackay HHS has put in place a series of supports to address immediate needs of women who have identified a need.

Women who have asked for emotional support have been connected with an external provider who can offer psychological assessment and referral to the most appropriate service for the woman's individual need.

Crisis mental health services are also available through Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636 and Lifeline on 13 11 14.

### Are women still able to report issues?

Yes, and there are a number of ways you can do this including:

- Through the feedback line on 4885 6244 which is open 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday (Calls can be returned outside hours if that is more convenient by arrangement).
- There is also an email address [MackayHHSFeedback@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MackayHHSFeedback@health.qld.gov.au) for any person who prefers that means of contact.

### What should I do if there is any sudden change in my health?

If you experience a medical or mental health emergency you should go to the Mackay Base Hospital Emergency Department, your nearest emergency department or call Triple 0 immediately.

### What should I do if I notice a non-urgent change in my health?

If you notice any non-urgent change in your health you can contact the feedback line on 4885 6244 which is open 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday. Alternatively contact the health service on [MackayHHSFeedback@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MackayHHSFeedback@health.qld.gov.au)

## How are we engaging with women who have come forward?

We are doing this in a number of ways including by direct phone, email and SMS contact to provide updates and check in with them.

We are providing regular updates on our website and through social media and other channels.

We are regularly briefing our Maternity Reference Group and other consumer and staff stakeholders.

## What is the investigation that has been announced?

The Chief Executive announced an investigation on the 12 October 2021. The terms of reference can be found at <https://www.mackay.health.qld.gov.au/terms-of-reference-announced-for-mackay-hhs-investigation/>

## Is the investigation independent of Mackay HHS?

All those appointed to the investigation are independent and are from outside the health service.

This provides confidence that feedback received from the community including consumers and staff, the health service's register of feedback and other data sets listed in the terms of reference, will be reviewed at arm's length from Mackay HHS.

## Who are the investigators?

There are four investigators who have been appointed to work as a team. Three of the investigators are pre-eminent clinical experts in their respective fields of gynaecology, obstetrics and midwifery. The fourth investigator is an experienced consumer representative.

- **Associate Professor Greg Duncombe**  
Greg Duncombe has trained as a Gynaecologist, Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist and Obstetrician. He is Clinical Director of Maternal Fetal Medicine, Sunshine Coast University Hospital and Pre-eminent Senior Staff Specialist (Obstetrics and Maternal Fetal Medicine), Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.
- **Professor Ted Weaver**  
Edward (Ted) Weaver is a Senior Medical Officer in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. He is Clinical Sub-Dean Griffith University School of Medicine Sunshine Coast. He is a Professor in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at both University of Queensland and Griffith University.
- **Professor Mary Sidebotham**  
Mary Sidebotham is a senior midwife and Professor of Midwifery at Griffith University. She has been instrumental in developing maternity services and designing midwifery education programs within the United Kingdom and Australia.
- **Leah Hardiman**  
Leah is an experienced consumer representative who has worked closely with other Hospital and Health Services to improve maternity, gynaecology,

neonatal and children's services. She sits on a number of statewide clinical and consumer advisory committees. She has also engaged in research projects that support better health outcomes.

### **What is the role of the consumer representative?**

The consumer representative is one of the four investigators. The consumer brings a unique user's perspective and experience to the investigation.

As the investigation is independent of MHHS, it is up to the investigators to run the investigation as they see fit within a legislated framework and utilising their expertise and skill.

### **What is the job of the investigators?**

The investigators have been appointed under Part 9 of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to investigate and make findings and recommendations about all of the matters set out in the Terms of Reference.

### **What are the criteria for appointing investigators?**

Investigators are appointed under the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 and must meet the following requirement:

*"a person may be appointed as a health service investigator only if the appointer is satisfied the person is qualified for appointment because the person has the necessary expertise or experience".*

You can read more about Part 9 investigations here [Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 \(legislation.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au)

### **What are the Terms of Reference?**

1. Review all:
  - (a) community feedback including feedback from consumers and staff received in response to the invitation and identify feedback which relates to the provision of the services; and
  - (b) incidents and complaints recorded in MHHS' RiskMan information system from 1 July 2019 and 31 October 2021 relating to the services; and
  - (c) other grouped data, whether referable to individual clinicians or the service as a whole, recorded by MHHS concerning safety and quality of the services in the period between 1 July 2019 and 31 October 2021.
2. From such review, identify any trends indicating any inadequacies in the safety and quality of the services in the period covered by the above review, including by reference to rates of complications.
3. Identify how, if at all, in the provision of the services over the said time MHHS did not acceptably comply with applicable standards or guidelines, and/or did not follow accepted practices for services of this kind, in a HHS like MHHS, that have contributed to the indicated inadequacies.
4. Identify any other factors pertaining to the provision of the services that have contributed to the indicated inadequacies which can and should be addressed.

5. In considering the above, have reference to the training program for trainees and non-accredited registrars in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at MHHS from 1 July 2019 to 31 October 2021, including by consulting with the Consultants and trainees and non-accredited registrars who have participated in it, where possible, to identify any contribution to issues revealed in your consideration of 4.2 – 4.4 above.
6. Make findings and recommendations in the Investigation Report in respect of each of the matters outlined in Sections 4.1 – 4.5 and identify any opportunities to improve the safety and quality of provision of the services in those respects.

The terms of reference can be viewed at

<https://www.mackay.health.qld.gov.au/terms-of-reference-announced-for-mackay-hhs-investigation/>

### **Will the investigators review feedback raised by women?**

Yes. Amongst other things, the investigators are required to review community feedback received in response to the invitation extended by the HSCE about obstetrics and gynaecology services in Mackay HHS.

### **What happens when the investigation finishes?**

When the investigators have finished their work they will provide findings and recommendations and Mackay HHS will engage and consult with patients, staff and the community on any identified opportunities to improve the safety and quality of provision of the obstetrics and gynaecology services. This will include the Mackay Maternity Consumer Reference Group as well as other consumer stakeholders.

It is too premature to discuss in any detail what this might look like before the investigation has finished, however by committing now to consultation we believe we are setting a strong foundation for addressing any issues.

### **What is the Mackay Maternity Consumer Reference Group (CRG)?**

The Maternity CRG is a voluntary group which was established 2020 and supports partnering with consumers and community representatives across the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac communities. The eight members appointed to the group meet quarterly to discuss and provide input into the delivery of innovative and sustainable maternity services for the HHS. Feedback provided by members is based on their individual experiences, strong community networks and understanding of local healthcare needs.

The partnership with our Maternity CRG members is designed to support the delivery of enhanced patient-centre and integrated healthcare by driving improvements in safe care and improved family outcomes and experiences. Members also contribute to the decision-making process for the development and delivery of maternity services.

### **Will the findings be made public / available to women who have lodged feedback?**

Mackay HHS is committed to releasing the outcomes and actions arising from the report.