

C-ECTF-26/17053

Central Queensland
Hospital and Health Service

Ms Kara Thomas
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Dear Ms Thomas

Thank you for your letter dated 22 September 2026, also addressed to the Honourable Tim Nicholls MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Dr David Rosengren, Director-General, Queensland Health, and Mr Matthew Cooke, Board Chair, Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service (CQHHS), in relation to the Rockhampton Hospital Maternity Unit, Birthing Suite and Special Care Nursery. The Minister, Director-General and Board Chair have asked that I respond directly to you in this instance.

The Health Service is already actively engaged in a number of processes relevant to the issues you have raised, including prior to your elevation relating to Rockhampton Maternity Services and the Maternity Action Group which was established to progress the matters raised by staff and representatives.

In addition, for your awareness we are taking the following steps.

- **Immediate clinical assurance:** We are reviewing current staffing and skill mix arrangements across the Special Care Nursery, Birthing Suite and Maternity Unit, with particular attention to neonatal competency, escalation arrangements and the capacity of the service to safely meet current demand.
- **Recruitment:** There is open recruitment for talent pools for registered midwives and registered neonatal nurses. In addition, recruitment activities are well progressed for clinical midwives (Gumma Gundoo), student midwives, the neonatal unit manager, maternity unit manager and assistants in nursing. To support successful recruitment, all role descriptions were reviewed to accurately reflect the role and work area, and position titles were aligned to EB12 generic statements.
- **Business Planning Framework (BPF) and establishment:** We are progressing the current review of the BPF and workforce requirements for the Maternity Unit and the Special Care Nursery, including consideration of current demand, acuity, establishment, vacancies and skill mix.
- **Workload escalation:** We are reviewing the operation of workload escalation processes, including the management and response to workload concern forms and after-hours escalation.

- **Clinical incident management:** We are reviewing relevant RiskMan data and incident-management processes to ensure concerns are appropriately recorded, reviewed, escalated and closed with appropriate feedback.
- **Staff wellbeing and psychosocial safety:** The concerns raised regarding fatigue, psychological safety and confidence in speaking up will form part of our review and ongoing engagement with staff.
- **Previous reviews and recommendations:** We will also consider the matters raised against relevant findings and recommendations from previous reviews of maternity services to provide assurance that controls remain effective and sustainable.

A number of the specific assertions in your correspondence, including matters concerning individual shifts, staffing arrangements, competency, incident reporting and workforce data, require verification. We do not propose to prejudge that work. However, where immediate risks are identified, appropriate controls will be implemented without waiting for completion of the broader review.

We recognise staff must be able to raise patient safety and workload concerns through appropriate channels and have confidence those concerns will be considered appropriately. Staff will continue to be encouraged to raise concerns through their manager, workload escalation processes, RiskMan and other established mechanisms.

We also acknowledge your request for a range of documents and detailed information. This request is currently being considered and reviewed in accordance with the relevant requirements of the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld) and other applicable legislative obligations. and we will respond separately regarding the information that can appropriately be provided.

The Health Service will continue to work through the Maternity Action Group and relevant workforce and clinical governance processes to address the issues raised. Most importantly, we are not working alone, rather seeking expertise and support when required, including working with staff who have expertise in Integrated Workforce Management (IWM) and rostering, and in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Midwife Officer to support building our workforce capacity, providing mentorship and continuous education across our teams.

We remain committed to working with midwives and nurses and all staff in the Maternity Unit, Birthing Suite and Special Care Nursery to provide safe and sustainable services at Rockhampton Hospital.

Should your members wish to engage further in relation to these matters, the health service would welcome connections and conversations.

Yours sincerely



Lisa Blackler

Health Service Chief Executive

20/10/2026