

# Terms of Reference

## Independent Investigation of Royal Hobart Hospital Maternity Services

### Background

On 27 August 2024, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) wrote to the Department of Health regarding safety concerns at the Royal Hobart Hospital's (RHH) Maternity Service. The concerns described are related to inadequate midwifery staffing levels impacting timeliness of induction, inadequate breastfeeding support, appropriate monitoring of women in labour, regular emergency equipment checks, inadequate monitoring of weight loss in babies, excessive workloads in the postnatal ward and the pregnancy assessment clinic exacerbated by high levels of activity in phone calls and facilitating ward access.

Following this, an internal review was undertaken at the RHH where the claims of the ANMF were explored.

On Friday 30 August 2024, the Hon Guy Barnett, MP, Minister for Health committed to an independent investigation of the RHH maternity service.

### Purpose

The investigation will independently examine the staffing/rostering, clinical data, systems, and culture across the RHH maternity service to investigate the ANMF claims and determine the systems changes needed to improve the safety and quality of patient care and where appropriate, make recommendations for improvement and implementation.

### Focus of the Investigation

- A review of midwifery staffing rosters to assess compliance with the industrially agreed Business Rules of Birthrate Plus® and the mechanisms utilised in circumstances where there are staffing gaps.
  - Review of staffing of the Pregnancy Assessment Clinic and the mechanism for mobilisation of additional staffing at times of increased activity.
  - Appropriateness of staffing levels during night shift.
  - Review of current staffing profile to better understand the balance of skills and experience and the supports available to early career midwives.
  - Review of recruitment processes to minimise any unnecessary delays in filling vacancies.
- A review of systems and processes related to induction of labour, including timelines from 'decision to induce' to 'commencement of induction'.

- A review of breastfeeding support practices and breastfeeding rates/ indicators on discharge.
- Conduct a Medication chart audit to determine compliance with medication administration orders.
- Undertake an audit of emergency equipment and medication checks and the issues related to ensuring that 100% compliance occurs.
- A review of stillbirths through the Tasmanian Perinatal Database (Obstetrix Tas) to review all stillbirths that have a connection to induction of labour since 1 January 2023.
- Consultation with health services staff and stakeholders via established clinical care networks, operational meetings, and forums.

This may include

- dedicated group forums, focus groups with RHH staff
- community consultation forums
- individual interviews with staff (with ANMF representation at the discretion of the individual)

The opportunity will be extended to support staff, medical and allied health clinicians to contribute relevant information pertaining to the terms of reference.

## **Independent Review Panel Membership:**

Chair

- Ms Amanda Singleton

Panel members

- Ann Maree Keenan
- Dr Sara Bayes

## **Secretariat**

The Office of the Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer (OCNMO) will provide the Secretariat function. This will include providing support to the Panel with meetings, research, the provision of documents and information for the investigation as requested by the Panel.

## **Report Delivery**

The investigation is expected to be completed by December 2024 and the Panel will report its recommendations to the Secretary, Department of Health.

Should the Panel require additional time to review and report, a formal request will be made to the Secretary, Department of Health.