

29th March 2018

The way ahead for Cohuna birthing service

A detailed safety and quality review has paved the way for Cohuna District Hospital to maintain its long-standing birthing service, which has seen the delivery of babies in the local district for generations.

The Safer Care Victoria review, led by the Chief Executive Officer of Safer Care Victoria, Professor Euan Wallace, was established last year after the Board of Cohuna District Hospital temporarily suspended birthing over concerns that shortfalls in staffing and processes may have put the safe service for mothers and babies at risk.

The review makes a number of recommendations to ensure the highest standards of safety and care for local families, the Hospital has accepted all recommendations.

The recommendations sets out the blueprint for the continuation of the service with extra staffing, resources and training to ensure the ongoing provision of high quality maternity care in Cohuna.

The Board has already implemented an after-hours birthing roster complete with extra specialist staff, and will create better connections with larger regional hospitals such as Bendigo Health.

Other recommendations reflect significant advances in maternity services and diagnostics in recent years, and the need to ensure the Hospital keeps pace with these developments, as well as additional obstetrician training.

Regular multi-disciplinary simulation training for Cohuna's medical and midwifery staff will greatly enhance staff confidence and skills, potentially including short-term clinical attachments and rotations across maternity units.

The Board has also endorsed the recommendation to recruit extra specialist staff and continue its region-wide efforts with other hospitals and major agencies to attract more medical and health professionals to live and work in the region.

A recent meeting of the region's hospitals, the Department of Health and Human Services and other key stakeholders discussed the need to recruit more doctors to the region.

Mothers can have every confidence in the safety and expertise of our maternity services, with reports showing Victoria's services are now the safest they have been for 15 years and mortality rates among the lowest in the developed world.

For further information please contact:

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