



Darwin
PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Media Release

20 February 2025

Healthscope announces intention to close maternity services at Darwin Private Hospital

Healthscope today announced it intends to cease offering maternity services at Darwin Private Hospital from 17 April 2025.

This decision was made after an extensive review of the service, in the face of significant declining private birth rates in Darwin and operational challenges including local skills shortages.

Birth rates at Darwin Private Hospital have been steadily declining over the past decade, from nearly 700 births in 2013 to less than 300 births in 2024.

The situation has been worsened by the increasing difficulty in accessing experienced clinicians, in particular paediatricians.

Healthscope's Northern Territory Manager Tim Daniel said, "Today's announcement was one we wish we didn't have to make."

"This was an incredibly difficult decision - we understand the significance of maternity services to families and the community, and we deeply regret the inconvenience and concern that the loss of this service will cause.

"Closing a service is always a last resort option. Over the past 12 months, we have carefully looked at a range of options for the maternity service at Darwin Private Hospital, including different service models and a reduction in capacity.

"Unfortunately, operational issues have become overwhelming."

Mr Daniel said staff and doctors at Darwin Private have been briefed today on the intention to close the maternity service.

"Today's announcement in no way reflects on the professionalism and dedication of our maternity team here at Darwin Private, who have provided outstanding care to thousands of families over many years," Mr Daniel said

"We are committed to supporting our patients and staff through this transition period. Our priority now is to ensure continuity of care for expectant mothers and to assist our dedicated healthcare professionals who have been providing exceptional care."

"We will be working with our impacted people to explore opportunities to work in other areas of Darwin Private Hospital wherever possible, including offering skills retraining," Mr Daniel said.

Mr Daniel said Healthscope is committed to working with NT Health over coming weeks on arrangements to transition Darwin Private's maternity service to other maternity services coordinated across NT Health.



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“We’ve been very grateful for the understanding and support offered by NT Health, and we will work closely with them to ensure all maternity patients have a smooth transition of their care to other services,” Mr Daniel said.

“We will also work with NT Health to explore employment opportunities for Darwin Private maternity staff.”

Darwin Private Hospital will be accepting its last maternity booking on 10 April 2025, with the service proposed to close on 17 April 2025. Expectant parents due to give birth prior to 10 April will not be impacted by this decision and will still receive the high-quality care Darwin Private Hospital prides itself on.

Those parents whose births are scheduled after this date will be provided with personalised support to help them transition to alternative maternity services, including at Royal Darwin Hospital.

“Our priority now is to ensure continuity of care for expectant parents and to support our dedicated healthcare professionals who have been providing exceptional care,” Mr Daniel said.

No other services are impacted at Darwin Private Hospital as a result of this decision. Other clinical specialities at Darwin Private, including gynaecological and paediatric surgical services, will continue as usual for patients.

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Background:

Healthscope is Australia’s only national private healthcare provider, operating 38 hospitals across the country, and employing over 18,000 people. Healthscope offers world-class patient care, including medical and surgical services, mental health treatment and rehabilitation services.