



Profit-driven maternity closures undermine access to essential services

Catholic Health Australia

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) says the closure of Healthscope maternity services in Hobart and Darwin will put more pressure on not-for-profit hospitals to deliver essential health services for those communities.

"This is yet another example of the for-profit healthcare model's failure to deliver essential health services to underserved communities," said CHA Director of Health Policy, Dr Katharine Bassett.

"It is troubling to see another for-profit healthcare provider cherry-picking the work that suits its bottom line and abandoning communities that rely on these vital services.

"Replacing maternity services with high-margin services is not the answer for patients.

"We have seen private providers, driven by profit motives, systematically reduce essential services across Australia when it is no longer financially advantageous, and the not-for-profit sector is often left to pick up the pieces with limited support," she said.

The closures will leave many in Hobart and Darwin with reduced access to essential maternity services, forcing women and families to travel further for their care, or alternatively shift the burden onto public hospitals.

"While CHA welcomes the federal government's announcement in December regarding potential reforms to maternity care, it is clear urgent action and bold reforms are needed to ensure continued access to these essential services." Dr Bassett said.

Catholic Health Australia has long advocated for reforms to maternity services, including the implementation of a National Private Price that ensures hospitals are paid appropriately to deliver maternity services.

“We urge governments to take immediate action to ensure vital services like maternity care are protected and accessible for all Australians. Inaction is no longer an option,” Dr Bassett said.

CHA recently lodged its pre-budget [submission](#) on Health which outlines several reforms to improve the viability of private maternity.

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