The needs and expectations of mothers in our rural community

Dr Judy Toman
Moruya, NSW
Rural maternity services wish list

- Skilled staff
- Ability to maintain skills
- General ward and emergency department staffing issues
- “In charge”
- More money!
Community expectations

- “Birth (in Australia) in the 21st Century is a safe process…”
- “Full facilities should be available, regardless of location, at all times…”
- “Birth is a natural process and there should be as little intervention as possible…”
- “Babies should be born where we have always been able to have them…”
And now Baby Friendly...

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy
2. Train staff to implement policy
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding
4. Help mothers start breastfeeding within 1 hour of birth
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed & maintain lactation
6. Give infants only breastmilk unless medically indicated
7. Practice rooming in mothers & babies
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand
9. Give no dummies to breastfeeding infants
10. Foster breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them upon discharge from hospital.
In the Eurobodalla...

- In early 2004, one GP obstetrician from Batemans Bay left.
- The remaining GP obstetrician was unable to continue alone.
- "Amalgamated" maternity departments to form the "Eurobodalla Maternity Services" based in Moruya.
- New GP Obstetrician appointed.
Changes included...

- Regular weekly midwives clinics
  Batemans Bay
  Moruya
  Narooma
- Shared care – GP, obstetrician, midwives
- Booking in interviews
- Separate maternity notes
- GP Obstetrician Registrar
- Students – midwifery, medical
Eurobodalla Maternity Services

OUR CLIENTS

- In 2004 / 2005 313 deliveries
- In 2005 / 2006 363 deliveries
- In 2006 / 2007 262 deliveries so far…

OUR TEAM

- 1 Obstetrician
- 2 GP Obstetricians
- 20 midwives (approx.) – at least 2 per shift
So how are we doing?
### Our survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total deliveries</td>
<td>724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twins</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 1 birth</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonatal death</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known moved</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>583 sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned to sender</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not wish to participate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL RESPONSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>195 (+ 8)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eurobodalla Mothers

- Average age: 30.26 yo (30.0 yo)
- Older than 35yo: 13.3% (19.5%)
- Age range: 17 to 43 yo
- 1st time mothers: 36%

Type of delivery:
- SVD: 66% (59.2%)
- Operative: 13% (11.0%)
- Caesars: 20% (29.4%)
87 to 92% of clinic users thought it was:

- at a suitable time
- at a suitable location
- a good service

23% felt it difficult to make appointments
Antenatal care

- All women over 20 weeks gestation seen in Maternity regardless of nature of presentation
- “Drop in” nature of rural obstetrics
- 30% reviewed without appointment
Classes

- 35% attended weekend classes
- 95% of 1st time mothers attended classes
- 44% would have preferred evening classes

Felt classes were

- useful information 95%
- well presented 91%
- good location 89%
- worth attending 89%
- suitable time 86%
- prepared them well for the birth 75%
Inpatient stay

- Average stay 3 days (0 to 34)
- 80% felt right amount of time
- 10% preferred to stay less or more

- 82% rated their care as good
- 15% rated their care as fair
- 3% rated their care as poor.
Breastfeeding

- 95% breastfeed in hospital
- Only 3% decrease at home in first week
- 86% breastfed within 1 hour of delivery
- 55% breastfed more than 6 months
- 33% still breastfeeding

![Bar chart showing breastfeeding rates over months]
Breastfeeding support

- Midwives 87%
- Home midwife 83%
- Family & friends 63%
- GP 29%

“I feel there is a lot of pressure to breastfeed and nobody really asks the mother how she’s doing without making her feel like she’d be doing the wrong thing to give up.”

“I think there needs to be a more realistic approach to breastfeeding.”
Home visits & follow up

- Midwife home visit 89%
- Child health nurse 83%
- GP / obstetrician visit at 6 to 8 weeks 81%
- Called maternity for help 54%
Overall

- 90% felt well informed about local services
- 95% would be happy to have another child at Moruya
We need to work on...

- Increase midwives clinic capacity
- Adjust classes timing and content
- Staff for busy maternity periods
- Education to mothers RE follow up
- Provide more suitable hospital diet options
- Provide feedback to GPs about pregnancy and birth
- GP education about breastfeeding
- Community education about breastfeeding.