Maternity Leaders in Place

The Territory Government has filled two leadership positions to oversee changes to maternity services.

An independent maternity review released in June recommended the need for an integrated maternity service overseen by an obstetrician and professional leader in midwifery.

The Health Minister Chris Burns said Rachael Lockey would take up the midwifery position from mid-January.

“Rachael comes to the position with a significant background in midwifery, specialist midwifery and coordinator posts in a range of services in the United Kingdom,” Dr Burns

“She has been a midwife for 14 years. Her most recent position has been the Coordinator of the Maternal and Child Health Service at Alukura Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Alice Springs.

“Rachael’s career has included research and publication, lecturing, management and project development – giving her an excellent breadth and depth of experience to take on this exciting and challenging role in the Territory.”

Rachael will share her time between Darwin and Alice Springs.

Dr Burns said a number of obstetricians had expressed an interest in the co-chair position and the Department of Health is continuing to talk to them.

“In the interim, Dr Simon Kane, Director of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at Alice Springs Hospital has agreed to act in the role until a permanent appointment is made,” he said.

“Simon is eminently qualified having worked in the UK, New Zealand, Africa and Australia in a variety of medical positions, including a year as a rural medical practitioner with Nganampa Health at Amata.

“He began as a Staff Specialist in Alice Springs in 2002 and was appointed the Director of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 2004. He is Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, a Member of the Australian College of Tropical Medicine, and holds a Masters in Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

“Having both Rachael and Simon in those very important positions will drive the reform we need for a new integrated maternity framework to provide a better mix of antenatal, birthing and post-natal care.”

Dr Burns said a further recommendation of the independent maternity review released in June was to set up a Clinical Reference Group.

“Now that we have the leadership in place, we will begin the process of setting up the Clinical Reference Group, which will have a mix of health professionals and community representatives. Advertising for the community representative seats will begin shortly.”

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