

## ALBURY WODONGA HEALTH INTEGRATION UPDATE

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

A significant milestone has been reached in the formation of the new integrated health service with the appointment of Mr Ulf Ericson as the inaugural Chair of Albury Wodonga Health.

This fortnight's newsletter also introduces the AWH maternity services unit, in the second in a series of articles to help you get to know AWH, the services on offer and the staff teams responsible for these services.

Ms Heather Gray  
Chief Executive  
Greater Southern Area Health Service

Mr Ray Sweeney  
Chief Executive Officer  
Wodonga Regional Health Service

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First Chair of  
AWH appointed

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Services Unit

### First Chair of Albury Wodonga Health appointed



Respected border businessman, Mr Ulf Ericson, has been appointed as the first chair of Albury Wodonga Health. In a joint announcement, the Victorian Health Minister, Daniel Andrews, and the NSW Health Minister, John Della Bosca, said the appointment of Mr Ericson would provide the leadership required to have the integrated health service in place and operational from 1 July 2009.

A partner in the local accounting and business advisory firm Huon Partners, Mr Ericson is also the current Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hume Building Society.

He has worked in the accounting industry since 1972, and holds degrees in economics and commerce, a graduate diploma in advanced taxation law and a diploma of law.

Mr Ericson's vast local knowledge and corporate experience will be very important in taking governance responsibility for the new health service. His appointment follows the establishment of Albury Wodonga Health by the Victorian Governor in Council at the end of March.

Mr Ericson welcomed his appointment to lead the board of the new organisation. "I am very humbled and honoured to have been selected. I am looking forward to meeting staff and working with them to make Albury Wodonga Health a great success for our community" he said.

Recruitment of other board members and a Chief Executive Officer for AWH are progressing well, with Mr Ericson participating in the appointment process.

### Albury Wodonga Health Maternity Services Unit

Maternity services in Albury Wodonga are provided at the Wodonga hospital campus. The Materinity Services Unit provides maternity services for all women in the Albury-Wodonga region, regardless of which side of the border they live on. The Unit currently employs the equivalent of fifty full time midwifery and administrative positions. Medical services are provided by a mix of Visiting Medical Officer specialist obstetricians and GP obstetricians.

The decision to locate maternity services in Wodonga was made ten years ago following agreement between the Albury and Wodonga public hospitals. Over that period of time, it has grown to be one of the largest maternity services in rural Australia with approximately 1,650 births per year.



Smiles all round from members of the Maternity Services team and some of their young charges.

One of the early hurdles involved the recording of “place of birth” on birth certificates. This issue was dealt with by allowing NSW parents to apply to have Albury listed as the place of birth on their child’s birth certificate.

The Maternity Services Unit is currently undertaking a strategic review of future directions for the service. The team working on the review will be consulting with a range of stakeholders including medical and nursing staff, hospitals in the surrounding region and the community.

The strategic review will also look at the workforce challenges facing regional hospitals. Many regional communities are struggling to maintain maternity services due to a lack of obstetricians and midwives. Albury-Wodonga currently has a good supply of specialist and GP obstetricians. The main workforce challenge for the Maternity Services Unit is recruiting qualified midwives. This is being partly addressed through a joint initiative between Wodonga Regional Health Service and Charles Sturt University to provide up to ten midwifery post graduate placements each year. Thirty members of the Midwifery Unit are graduates of the course.

A recent satisfaction survey of midwifery patients produced outstanding results. The courtesy of the nursing team was rated by 93% of patients as “excellent to very good” with a further 6% rating it as “good.” Challenges were identified with temperature of meals being delivered and the team is working with the kitchen to improve this. The survey also showed excellent results for pain relief, respect for privacy and cleanliness.

### Further information

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