

Inquest into the death of Zamia Ely-Smith

On 10 January 2021, Zamia Ely-Smith was delivered at home with the assistance of two midwives. She was born unresponsive and was transported by ambulance to the Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) and died on 13 January 2021.

Deputy State Coroner Bentley delivered the findings of inquest on 17 September 2021.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

Further information relating the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible agency named in the response.

Recommendation 1

Queensland Health consider the development of a standard guideline for planned home births:

- a. recommendations regarding suitability for home birth
- b. reasons for transfer of mother to hospital during home birth
- c. an information sheet, compiled in conjunction with RANZCOG, to be provided to pregnant women and their partners advising of the risks associated with home birthing and the medical advantages of birthing in a hospital
- d. a comprehensive list of required equipment to be taken to a home birth including
 - i. a portable CPG monitor
 - ii. a laryngeal mask
- e. minimum standards for practitioner training including advanced neonatal resuscitation training an emergency checklist for the resuscitation of neonates for the use of midwives assisting in home births.

Response and action: the recommendation was not implemented.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health.

On 7 July 2022 the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House responded:

At present, Queensland Health does not provide or deliver a home birth program, consequently the recommendation is unable to be implemented in the current format. However, in mid-2021 the Department of Health's System Management Advisory Committee discussed and endorsed the development of a policy position paper for Queensland publicly funded homebirth, this is currently being progressed by Clinical Excellence Queensland.

Queensland Health has provided the Coroners Court of Queensland with additional information and suggested the recommendation could be rephrased to enable broader consideration of homebirth options and policy reforms.

