**19 September 2024**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Perinatal Wellbeing Centre Welcomes Election Commitments to Establish a Mother-Baby Mental Health Unit**

The Perinatal Wellbeing Centre (PWC) applauds recent election announcements to establish a six-bed residential Mother-Baby Mental Health Unit. These commitments are recognised as vital to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of mothers and their babies across Canberra.

Dr. Yvonne Luxford, the Perinatal Wellbeing Centre's Chief Executive Officer, strongly supported the initiative.

“Commitments from both ACT Labour and The Greens to establish a dedicated Mother-Baby Mental Health Unit represent a significant milestone for perinatal mental health in Canberra, and we would love to see all candidates do the same.”

We know that the perinatal period is a time of immense vulnerability, and timely access to specialised care is critical. This unit will provide families with the support they desperately need without the burden of travelling interstate.”

The Centre has long advocated for establishing such a facility, and the growing demand for its services highlights the pressing need for local inpatient mental health support. ACT L

"At present, new mothers facing mental health crises are forced to travel to Sydney for treatment, placing additional strain on families already in distress," Dr. Luxford explained.

“Having a residential facility right here in Canberra will allow mothers to remain with their newborns in a safe environment while confronting mental health challenges."

“Perinatal mental health challenges that aren’t addressed can have devastating long-term effects on both the mother and child if the appropriate care is not provided. Offering support, mental health resources, and the opportunity for women to recover with their newborns in a safe and nurturing environment will play a pivotal role in ensuring the wellbeing of both mother and baby."

Yvonne has seen firsthand the impact that perinatal mental illness can have on families. The centre has supported over 500 families this year alone, and the demand for mental health services continues to rise.

The Perinatal Wellbeing Centre remains committed to working with the ACT Government to ensure the success of this initiative. Dr. Luxford concluded,

“This is a critical step in building a future where the mental health of new mothers and their families is prioritised, and where Canberra becomes a leader in perinatal care. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate in making this vision a reality.”

**About Perinatal Wellbeing Centre**

The Perinatal Wellbeing Centre is dedicated to supporting parents' mental health and wellbeing during the perinatal period. The Centre provides counselling, group support, and a range of evidence-based programs to help parents navigate the challenges of new parenthood.

**For more information about Perinatal Wellbeing Centre, visit** [Perinatal Wellbeing Centre](https://www.perinatalwellbeingcentre.org.au/)

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