

## Birthing Unit Staff Insights

We spoke to Midwifery Unit Manager Kerry Tosswill and Clinical Midwifery Unit Manager Kirsty Edwards about their involvement in the Redevelopment and why they believe the birthing unit will be the best in the state.

Kerry, who has worked at Nepean Hospital for 20 years, and Kirsty, who has been here for 19 years, agree that being part of the hospital's Stage 1 Redevelopment has provided a once in a lifetime opportunity.

“The Redevelopment is a major change for Nepean Hospital,” says Kerry. “We’ve enjoyed working with the redevelopment team and we feel like we’ve been heard when it comes down to what we need in the unit. Based on what we’ve designed, we believe we will be leading NSW in maternity care once the hospital is finished.

“The women in the west are really going to benefit and that’s what excites me the most.”

The Nepean Women and Children’s Health Unit team has been involved in the Stage 1 Redevelopment design from the very beginning. Their unit will be located in the new 14-storey hospital tower that is currently under construction.

“The unit made an agreement that we would take a team approach to the Redevelopment, which has been really beneficial, as we’ve made a lot of progress and done a lot of good work,” says Kerry.



From left: Clinical Midwifery Unit Manager Kirsty Edwards, Clinical Midwifery Consultant Sue Downward and Midwifery Unit Manager Kerry Tosswill

“We have weekly meetings with staff to go through the design and get as much feedback as we can.”

The new birthing unit - which will house 18 birthing suites - has been designed with women at the centre. The unit will have dimmable lighting options as well as natural lighting, a special area for families and support people and larger birthing spaces.



# Nepean Redevelopment

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“The environment impacts on the way a woman labours, so we wanted to provide a space to facilitate the best birth outcome while remaining within a clinical centre,” says Kerry.

The hospital beds, which are normally in the centre of a room, will be off to one side so women can move freely through the room. Other features of the room include a birthing bath and a leaning mantle that women can use to support themselves while standing.

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The Women’s Acute Assessment Unit will also be part of the Birthing Unit to provide a one-stop shop for patients.

“Currently, women who are experiencing early pregnancy or post-natal complications have to go to the emergency department which is not always the ideal option. The Women’s Acute Assessment Unit will be part of the Birthing Unit in the new tower so midwives who specialise in pregnancy loss and postnatal complications can provide the right care, in the right place.”

Another feature of the new birthing unit will be a fetal monitoring system which will allow obstetricians to monitor babies and the progress of a woman’s labour remotely.

Obstetric and obstetric gynecology theatres are also set to be part of the unit. This will enable women who have emergency caesareans to stay in recovery beds located within the birthing unit with their baby and support person, while being cared for by their midwife and recovery nurse.



Artist’s impression of new birthing unit

Despite working full time roles in a busy unit and with tight time frames, both Kerry and Kirsty say they’ve enjoyed being part of the Redevelopment process.

“We’ve enjoyed working as a team, having our weekly meetings and developing new models of care,” says Kerry. “We also visited North Shore Hospital staff who were very helpful in regards to the redevelopment process. We can read architectural design plans now – something I never thought we’d learn to do as a midwife.”

If you have been involved in Nepean Hospital’s Stage 1 Redevelopment process and would like to share your story, get in touch at [HI-nepeanredevelopment@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HI-nepeanredevelopment@health.nsw.gov.au).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

@ [HI-nepeanredevelopment@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HI-nepeanredevelopment@health.nsw.gov.au)

[www.nepeanredevelopment.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nepeanredevelopment.health.nsw.gov.au)

