

NASOG welcomes establishment of stillbirth research centre

The National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG) today welcomed the launch of the first national research centre dedicated to investigating stillbirths and their causes.

The Stillbirth Centre for Research Excellence, to be based at the University of Queensland's Mater Research Institute (MRI), is a joint endeavour involving MRI, the Stillbirth Foundation Australia and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Dr Gary Swift, President of NASOG - the peak body for women's health specialists - said the establishment of the centre was an important development in helping to reduce the current overly high rates of stillbirths in Australia.

"According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, for every 135 Australian births one baby is stillborn," Dr Swift said.

"This new centre will focus research on determining the causes of still births, and hopefully developing methods of reducing the incidence of these tragedies.

"It is an area of research and action where Government action has been noticeably lacking and we congratulate the partners on the establishment of this research centre.

"The aim to reduce stillbirths by at least a third over the next five years is something which all Australians should support and NASOG offers its support for this very important and worthy initiative."

One focus of the centre will be women with stillbirth risk factors and how to better manage their care, including through the use of a mobile phone app to educate pregnant women about decreased foetal movement.

Dr Swift said tools such as the app would help pregnant women better identify signs that the baby may be unwell.

"We know from experience that there are often signs but they can go unrecognised," Dr Swift said.

The centre will also focus on identifying causes of stillbirth to help develop preventive measures.

"Another very important area of the centre's work will be in improving bereavement care and counselling for women who have suffered the trauma of stillbirth," Dr Swift said.

"Regrettably there will be stillbirths and caring for the mother after the event has been identified as an area where improvements can be made."

For all Media Inquiries, please contact NASOG CEO Caroline Khalil on 0400 101 109.