



Catherine's House
for mothers, babies and families



**Help establish a dedicated
perinatal mental health
and wellbeing service**



The birth of a child is a defining moment

It's joyful, magical, and daunting, often all at the same time.

For one in five women, the first days, months and years with their child are mentally very difficult and at times, unbearable.

Their babies can experience low birth weight, poor immune systems, and trauma in the vital first 1000 days of life.

Entire families—fathers, siblings, grandparents—can be profoundly affected.

In the very worst cases, mothers can feel so anguished they take their own lives.

It's time families have a better chance of surviving and thriving when a new baby arrives.



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That's why Mater is working to establish a dedicated perinatal mental health and wellbeing service for mothers, babies and families.

It will be built adjacent to Mater Mothers' Hospital in South Brisbane.

And, through an act of extraordinary grace and generosity from the Sisters of Mercy, the Mater Convent will be repurposed as Catherine's House—a home where mothers and babies can stay together while receiving treatment at the new perinatal mental health and wellbeing service.

The challenge now is to create this wonderful new home.

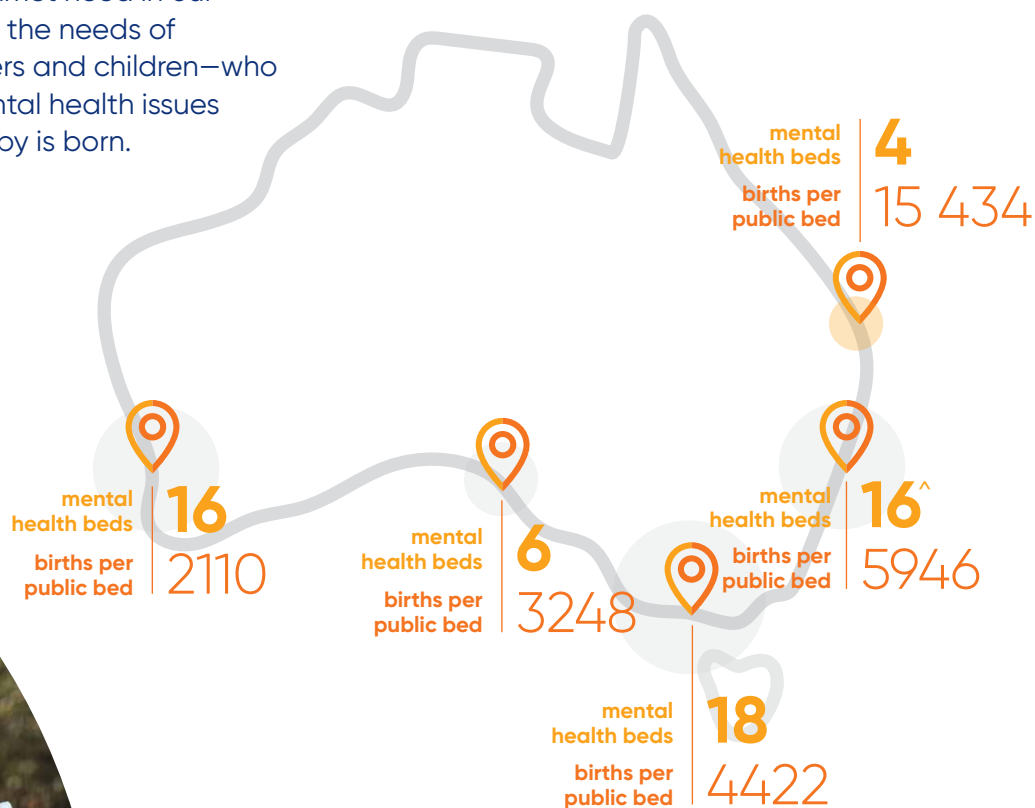
The need to help

In Queensland more than 60 000 babies are born each year. Yet, there is only one public four-bed mother and baby perinatal mental health facility in the entire state.

There is an immediate, unmet need in our community to respond to the needs of women—and their partners and children—who experience perinatal mental health issues before and after their baby is born.

Catherine's House will change that.

With the help of philanthropy and the community, Mater will create a vital service for women who experience perinatal mental health issues.



[^]Includes mother and baby mental health facilities under development.





Did you know?



1 in 5 mothers



1 in 10 fathers will experience perinatal depression and anxiety*

 **100 000**

Australians are affected by perinatal depression and anxiety each year and suicide is the leading cause of maternal death*

Mater Family Wellbeing Service will complement and integrate with other Mater Health services across Queensland, including Mater's Neonatal Critical Care Unit, 24-hour Pregnancy Assessment Centre, Parenting Support Centre and Parent Aide Unit. The new service will be co-located with Mater's paediatricians, lactation consultants, psychologists, allied

health professionals and mental health services, in Catherine's House.

It will be just metres away from Mater Mothers' Hospital in South Brisbane.

Once established, the Mater Family Wellbeing Service will complete Mater's comprehensive offering to parents and their babies.

*Data source: PwC Consulting Australia. (Nov 2019). Executive Summary. *The Cost of Perinatal Depression and Anxiety in Australia*, pp. 5.



A message from

Sister Angela Mary

This place has always been a home. My hope is that every mother in need will find her way here and feel welcomed.

Mater's Convent, to be repurposed to Catherine's House, has been home to more than 300 Sisters of Mercy over the past 100 years. Now, this sacred place is being turned into this most wonderful use.

I remember the first time I heard the Mater Convent was to be redeveloped. I was talking with health professionals from Mater about what has been described in Australia as 'an epidemic of unrecognised pain, sadness and morbidity.'

When someone said 'we want to set up a centre where we can look after mothers with perinatal mental health issues, and we're looking at the Convent', I burst into tears.

I thought it so fitting that the Convent could be turned into this most wonderful use. And right here in the grounds of the hospital, where it's so easy to have access to specialists and people who can help mothers and new babies.

The Sisters feel the same about it; they are absolutely thrilled. They want it to be this.

To know that mothers who come to this place will be blessed with professional help and lovingly held, brings great joy to Mater's Sisters of Mercy. We want them to feel at home.

Sister Angela Mary

Sister of Mercy, Visionary and Advocate





Catherine's House has been named in honour of Catherine McAuley, the founding Sister of Mercy who began her life-long work in helping the community in 1831.

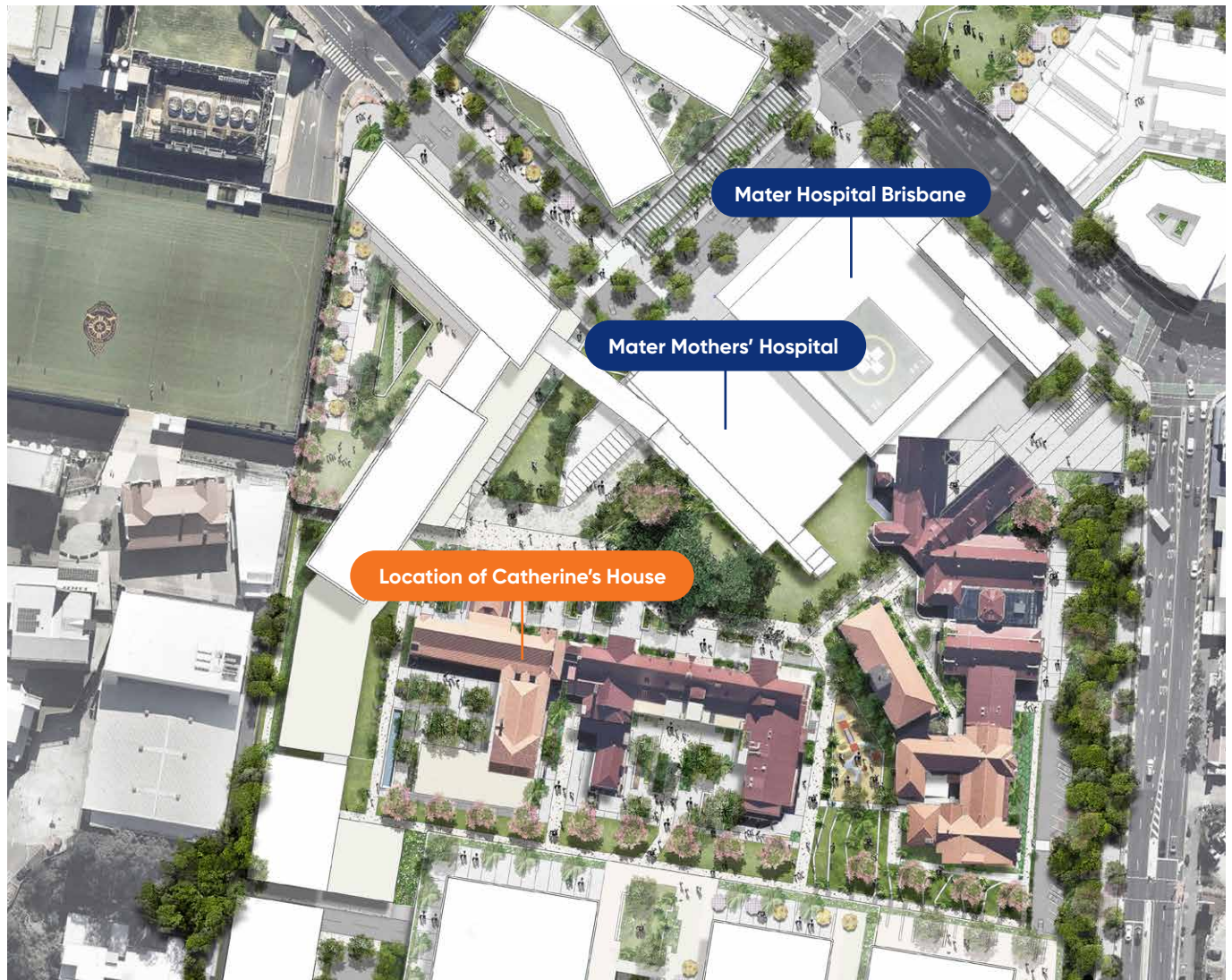
Front view visualisation of Catherine's House



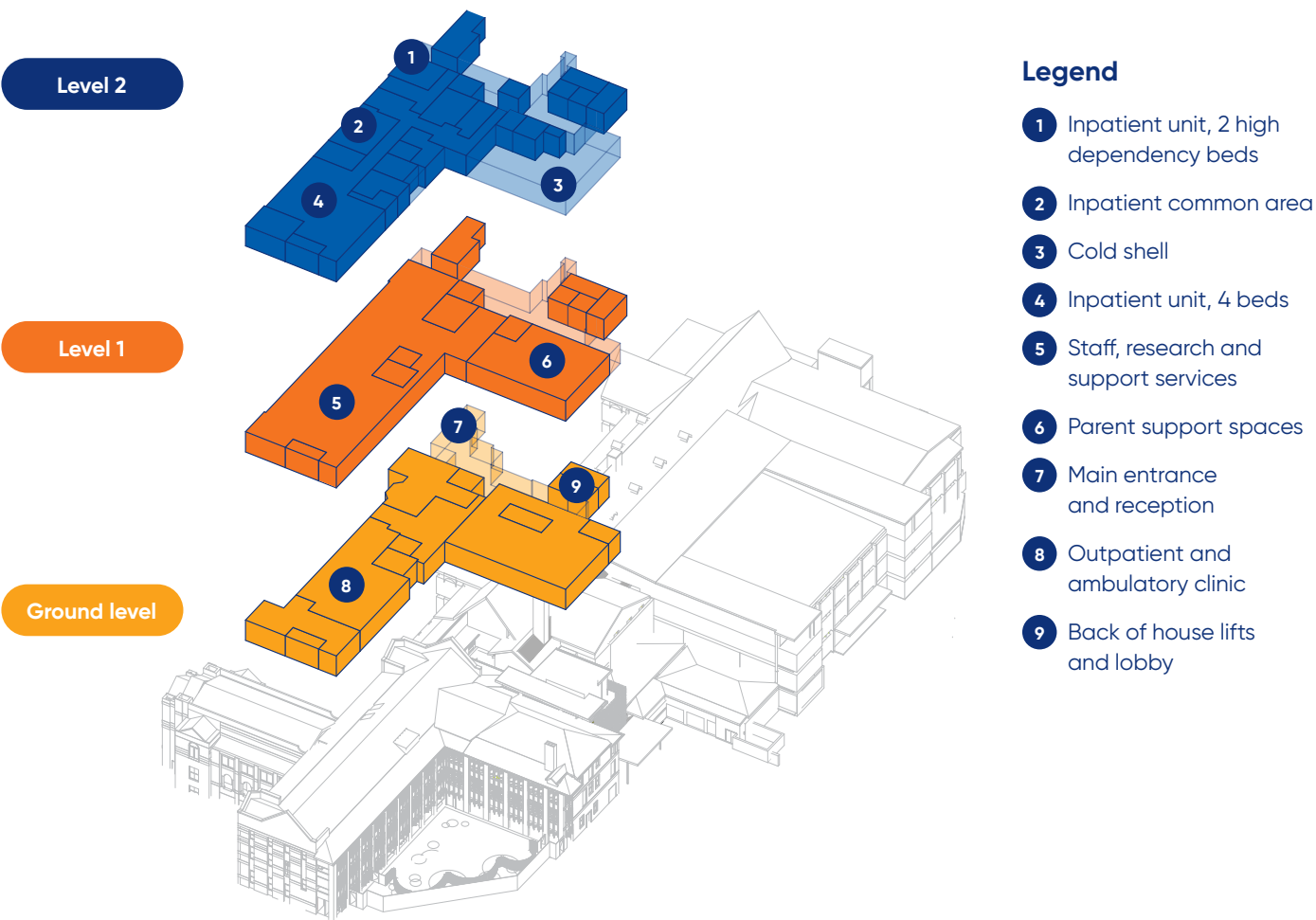
By November 2022, Catherine's House will have been transformed from an empty building—after a devastating storm in November 2014 that destroyed many parts of it—to become home to a dedicated perinatal mental health service in Queensland.

Once again, it will be a home and a sanctuary; a place for healing and growth in the heart of our community.

Site map for Mater Family Wellbeing Service



Catherine's House floor plan



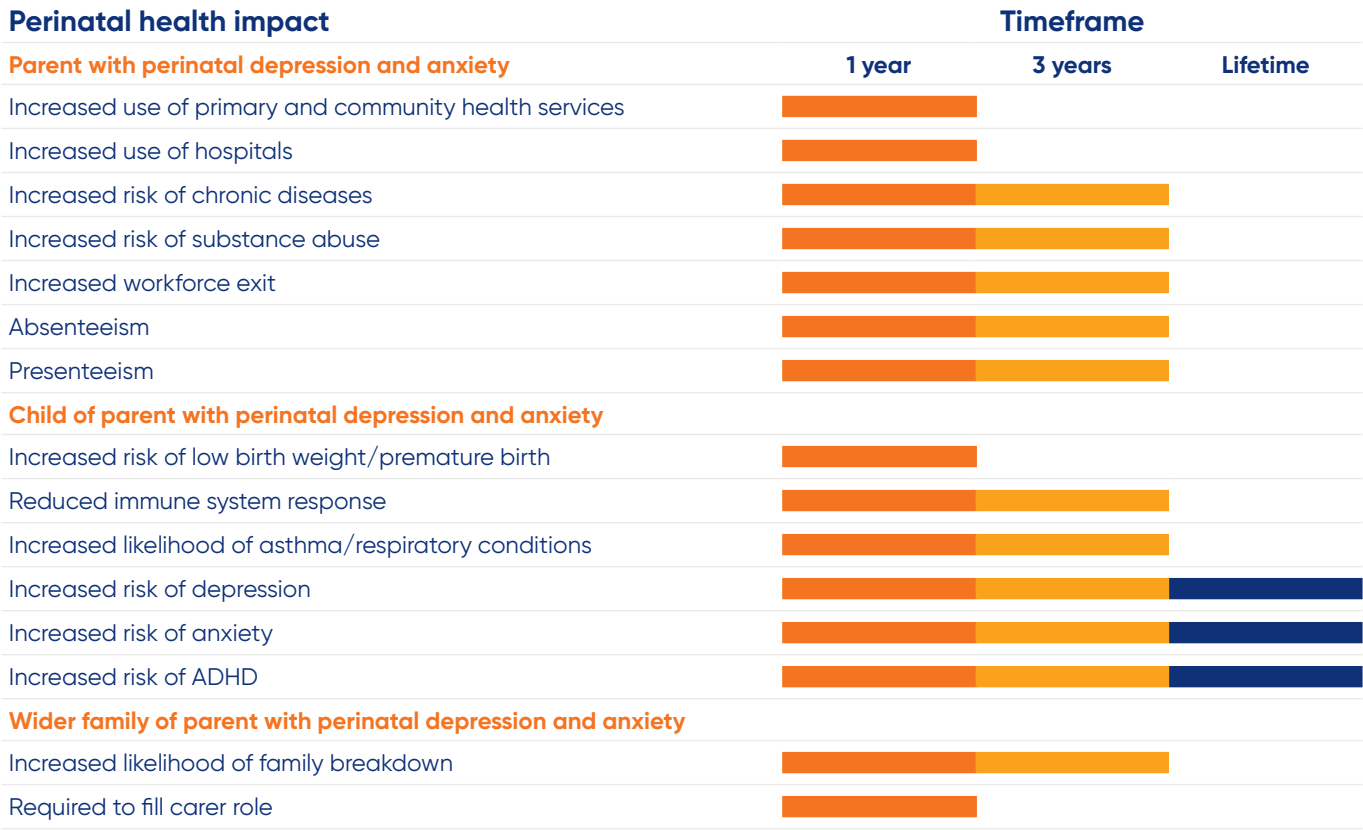


The long term impact

Perinatal depression and anxiety takes a heavy toll on parents, children and families.

It is a treatable illness. With treatment, the social, health and wellbeing benefits for mother, child and family are enormous and last a lifetime—so creating a dedicated perinatal mental health service is critical.

Impact of perinatal mental health



*Data source: PwC Consulting Australia. (Nov 2019). Modeling Time Period for Individual Cost Elements. *The Cost of Perinatal Depression and Anxiety in Australia*, pp. 13.

With your help, this new Mater service can save lives and futures.

When I was a psychiatric nurse in the 1980s, many women with perinatal depression and anxiety were treated in old-fashioned Victorian-style psychiatric institutions. It was not an ideal environment.

Even today, where there are no designated beds for this type of problem, a woman might be moved into a psychiatric care setting where her baby can't stay with her, her partner can't stay with her, and her physical healthcare needs are not easily met. Worse still, she might not get any treatment at all for her mental health.



A mother's perinatal depression and anxiety can affect everyone in a family unit, including grandparents.

If a mum becomes unwell, the day to day running of the house is disrupted, relationships with other children and her partner are affected, and there are well-documented impacts for the new child.

The new Mater service will benefit entire families. We see the mum, the baby and family as part of the package. It's really important that we can assist them all.

Families will be able to access a little bit of help—say some support with baby's sleep patterns or some parenting classes for new dads—but we might also have mothers staying with us for three or four weeks while they recover from a very significant mental health issue.

Whatever service families need, we want them to feel safe, and know we have the skills and experience to help them.

We want this place to feel like a sanctuary.

Greg McGahan

Senior Manager, Mater Mental Health Services



When considering our family's philanthropy, we want to support projects that will have long-term impact on communities. For us, the healthy wellbeing of families is immensely important, so the development of the Mater Family Wellbeing Service has our full support. We are honoured to be part of this Queensland service.

Dr Shirley Hsieh, whose family is among those who have kindly pledged to support the creation of Catherine's House.





A message from the

Executive Director

The Mater Family Wellbeing Service will bring together the very best things about Mater, especially the exceptional individuals who want to help, and change the lives of families.

It's fitting that this new service will be created *in* the geographic heart of Mater, close to hospitals and other facilities that will support mothers and new babies through a crucial time.

But Catherine's House will also be built *from* the heart of Mater.

By that, I mean it will be built on Mater's values of service to the community and excellence in healthcare.

It will retain the gentle dignity and care for others that the Sisters of Mercy cultivated in their beautiful Convent home for so long.

And, I hope, it will attract philanthropists who see the urgent need for perinatal mental health service for mothers, babies and their families—and who want to help.

Perinatal mental health issues do not discriminate. I have spoken to women who've told me they previously had excellent mental health, but were profoundly affected by hormonal changes associated with childbirth. They spoke of feelings that were very different to 'feeling down' or 'not being in control'.

Perinatal mental health can be treated, but only if we have dedicated resources and facilities to do so.

The Mater Family Wellbeing Service located at Catherine's House is your opportunity to help give Queensland mums and babies the best perinatal healthcare in Australia.

I invite you to join the Mater community and give families hope, care and their best chance of a healthy future—by supporting the transformation of Catherine's House.

Andrew Thomas

Executive Director, Mater Foundation

From Convent to state-of-the-art perinatal mental wellbeing service



Plans to repurpose
the building are
released



Detailed design
developed



Internal works
completed



Building
commissioned



First mothers, babies
and families welcomed

2015



Mater Convent
closes due to
horrific storm

2018

2020

2021



Construction
commences

2022

Late
2022



The families we want to see

When I first heard about the Mater Family Wellbeing Service, I just thought that this was the most fantastic thing to ever happen for Queensland.

I had postnatal depression after two of my three children. With my first born, four weeks or so before she was due, I'd been in the mad rush finishing up work and it was the first time going through a pregnancy and leading up to having a baby.



I've got to do something about this because I'm not coping at all.

I knew things weren't quite right. And it was amazing how quickly things descended from that not feeling right to thinking, "I've got to do something about this because I'm not coping at all."

I had become so desperate that I wanted to take my own life.

That was the hardest point where I was really at the end and wanting it to be the end. I wanted to not wake up and have another day like this. I ended up being induced two weeks early with my daughter so that we could start some medication and start intensely focussing on my health, as well as my baby's health at the same time.

Mary-Anne Richardson

A Queensland mother with lived experience of perinatal depression

Mary-Anne is one of many women among us who are strong, capable and loving—but whose mental health can be profoundly affected by pregnancy and birth.

By supporting Mater Family Wellbeing Service, you can make the experience of a mental health crisis so much easier for women like Mary-Anne.

You can give them best-in-class healthcare, in a setting that is warm, supportive and healing. You can help make sure their little babies get the nurturing they need to thrive.

And, best of all, you can send them home healthy, happy, and looking forward to the joys of family life together.





You are invited to help create a much needed service for mothers, babies and families needing urgent mental health and emotional support during a new baby's first 1000 days of life.

If you'd like to know more, please contact:

Andrew Thomas

Executive Director, Mater Foundation

P 07 3163 8130

E andrew.thomas@mater.org.au

Lesley Ray

Director—Philanthropy, Mater Foundation

P 07 3163 2736

E lesley.ray@mater.org.au

Thank you