

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## SMOKE FREE WOMB

Murchison MLC and midwife, Ruth Forrest, has encouraged and supported a move by the North West Private Hospital to lead the way in encouraging optimal care for childbearing women and their families through promotion of the maternity unit as a 'smoke free' zone.

"North West Private Hospital employs 26 midwives, all of whom are non-smokers, including some ex-smokers, who recognise the risks of smoking in pregnancy and breastfeeding to the mother, unborn and newborn baby. These risks include increased risk of infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth, high blood pressure, bleeding in pregnancy, low birth weight, prematurity, respiratory illnesses, neonatal death and SIDS to name a few" Ms Forrest stated.

North West Private Hospital would like to expand the 'smoke free' zone to other areas of the hospital and have suggested that support for staff to cease smoking including the provision of nicotine patches is being considered.

North West Private Hospital management have stated that smoking cessation support would also be offered to all women when booking in to the hospital and to any staff from other areas who requested it.

"It would be a great outcome if North West Private Hospital can become the first 'smoke free' hospital in the State, particularly in light of the duty of care health care providers have in promoting optimal health outcomes for all" Ms Forrest said.

"What better place to start than where life begins, at a time we are able to have a degree of control over the environment our next generation is living in" Ms Forrest stated.