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Call for improvement of Australia's overstretched health system

Australia's peak body of women's health specialists, the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynecologists (NASOG) says the avoidable deaths of infants at Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital highlights the strain associated with Australia's overburdened hospitals, the need for increased resources, greater collaboration of governments regarding funding, and improved clinical governance.

President of the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians & Gynecologists (NASOG) Dr Mike Aitken said, "we are deeply saddened to hear of these deaths. Our thoughts are with the families who have suffered unimaginable loss."

"Pregnancy and childbirth are always associated with a high level of risk. These tragic deaths highlight the importance of a well funded and adequately resourced healthcare system," Dr Aitken added. "I implore expectant mothers and their families to maintain every confidence in their Obstetric practitioners. They are highly skilled doctors who have undergone rigorous training, and are required by law to maintain their competence." Dr Aitken reinforced that Australia was one of the safest countries to give birth in, and that patients should seek advice from their obstetric care providers if they are concerned.

"The overburdened and overstretched nature of our public hospital system is well documented. It is now time to act to make sure that such a tragedy is not repeated. Hospitals need support to provide high quality clinical care and ensure safety", Dr Aitken said.

"It is essential the Government analyse the core reasons underpinning Australia's overwhelmed hospital system. Government has a responsibility to ensure adequate resources are appropriately allocated across Australia's health system, and that appropriate clinical governance is in place to ensure good outcomes for the community."

"We await the findings of the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA)'s investigation into the deaths, and the recommendations and actions that will be forthcoming."

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NB: Dr Aitken and Dr Ang are clinicians and may be with patients at the time of your call

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About NASOG: www.nasog.com.au

The National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG) is a not for profit professional association representing specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the leading providers of specialist women's health services. Australia is recognised as one of the safest countries in the world to give birth or to be born. NASOG strongly endorses our collaborative, proactive model of obstetric and midwifery care for all women giving birth in Australia. The safety of this existing model of care is confirmed by research from Australia and around the world.