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New birthing props for Wollongong Hospital

Local women are being given more choice during labour, with Wollongong Hospital introducing a range of new birthing props to its Maternity Ward.

Beanbags, balls, stools and mats are among the items that women can access, and staff have been trained in their use to guide women on how best to utilise this equipment.

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) Clinical Co-Director Maternity and Women's Health, Dr Henry Murray, said the new props are part of a collaboration between the hospital and advocacy group, Better Births Illawarra to enhance the birthing experience of women at the hospital.

"We have greatly appreciated the opportunity to hear feedback and stories from the Group as well as local mothers about their own stories of their birthing experiences," Dr Murray said.

"This feedback has helped guide us in providing the highest quality care for women accessing our maternity services," he said.

"The new props will aid women in spontaneous labour to have a birth where they are mobile and in the best position for their needs and brings Wollongong Hospital into line with all other similar obstetric units around NSW," Dr Murray added.

Better Births Illawarra spokesperson, Giselle Coromandel, said the group was pleased the hospital had responded to requests from local women to purchase the new equipment.

"Using these props is a really simple but effective way for women to remain active in labour, which evidence shows can lead to shorter labours and less intervention," Ms Coromandel said.

"Hospital staff have been regularly meeting with women to get their feedback on giving birth at Wollongong Hospital. This shows that they are listening to women and want to give them a choice."

Wollongong Hospital spends more than \$19 million a year on its maternity service, which supports women to make informed decisions about their birth options.