

**ANONYMOUS 17391 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions**

Strengthen the universal Maternal and Child Health service, ensuring that universal health services have the ability to refer and support families equitably, regardless of geographical area. MCH Nurses should be able to refer to routine services, such as audiology, radiology (for hip dysplasia checks), mental health and paediatric services to reduce the number of barriers families experience when linking with required health professionals. All MCH Services should also have access to a paediatrician or paediatric fellow for bulk billed assessments offered by telehealth or in person.

Community Health services need to be better funded, and also better regulated to ensure that all services offer the same breadth of services to young families. Our local community health service for example (in Maryborough VIC) has services for adults, and speech therapy (with a 12-18 mth waiting list) is the only service on offer for children. Podiatry, physio, OT etc. are not offered, and there are no private services available in the Shire either. This is in an area that is rated 79th out of 79 local government areas on the SEIFA index, and any child that is identified as needing early intervention cannot be seen locally. This is terrible, and just ensures that intergenerational disadvantage is perpetuated.