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## Just who supports your plan, Carmel?

— Editorial —

### THE Manly Daily

WHEN the Health Department unveiled the new combined maternity unit at Manly Hospital, it was talked up as a first-class service for local women.

The bureaucrats were less talkative about the decision to shut down the service at Mona Vale, which has outraged mums across the northern beaches.

No matter what spin the government apologists apply, most locals

can see the restructure for what it is: another cost-slashing exercise to northern beaches health services.

Documents obtained under Freedom of Information laws reveal for the first time what midwives think of the decision.

"I just feel like a number a lot of the time," one midwife responds to a questionnaire on maternity services. Another says the changes are "making staff feel worthless".

It must be acknowledged that the survey was taken in May — before the opening of the new facility at Manly — but it seems unlikely that morale has greatly improved since then. In fact, the

sight of midwives and mums joining in a protest outside Parliament House just last week confirms this is the case.

Sooner or later the department and Health Minister Carmel Tebbutt will have to answer the question: if the mothers, midwives and obstetricians think the new service is a bad idea, then who precisely supports it?

## quickview

■ I AM confused, the Manly Mayor and former Deputy Mayor have told us, repeatedly, that the ombudsman's report was only about two DAs in over 6000. Now they cannot apologise or pay the payment recommended by the ombudsman because it may set a precedent. My question is: How many other people have been forced to the the Land and Environment Court by the council? And have they also been forced to pay huge legal fees as well

Web comment from Digby

## Say no to alcohol-fueled nights out

I FELT compelled to write after reading the "Your drink-driving can destroy lives" editorial on Nov 16.

Yes, I agree that we should name and shame those who are brought before court each week, however to then give them a defence of "lack of public transport" and "sporadic taxi service", is surely giving them the excuse they want.

I'm sorry, but if a person cannot go for a night out once in a while and not drink, then there is something wrong with them.

It's called being sensible, having willpower or just once in a while thinking of others rather than yourself.

Too many people today have to have a drink to have a good time and that is a sad thing in our society. Whatever happened to designated drivers or just being

## Brave rescue of teenagers

LAST Friday there was a near drowning of two young teenagers at Avalon Beach. It was about 6pm and the lifeguards had gone home.

We arrived in the carpark to go for a swim when my husband Michael saw the boys struggling in a huge rip off Avalon pool.

Being a surfer, he rushed down to the water and asked me to find a surf board.

I ran up to some young women on the beach and asked if any of them were surf-lifesaver trained. No they weren't, so I took their surfboard and my husband paddled out through the rough three-foot surf.

I asked a young man on the beach to run and call in

some more surfers as Michael is 62 and I was frightened he would be in trouble.

The drowning boys were holding their arms up and going under. Another surfer on a paddle board arrived at the same time as Michael and the two of them took one boy each to the shore.

I am telling this story because it is not the first time I have seen Mike do this. Surfers rescue people often. Why were two local 13-year-olds swimming in a rip? Why didn't they have surf awareness? I hope all schools make learning about surf dangers a must.

Julie Janson  
Avalon



The incident at Avalon Beach highlights the need for surf safety awareness.

■ AS a society we are mad putting stress on courts with drink driving cases. I got done a couple of years ago and got a six-month ban for low-range drink-driving — exactly what I deserved. Unfortunately the person before me got off on the same charge. There should be no excuses with a mandatory sentence that doesn't even go to court.

P. Cahill, North Manly

■ RE "Max leaves the nest" (MD, Nov 17): Thanks Max, the Sea Eagles fans will always remember what you did for us. Best wishes.

Web comment from Rowan

■ MAX, thanks for saving our club, we'll always love you and you'll always be remembered by us.

Web comment by Riley

■ MY son and I were involved in a car accident on Saturday, November 13, at Beacon Hill. I would like to sincerely thank the