

Your support funds vital medical research, equipment and care for premature babies.

More than 26,000 babies are born premature in Australia each year. Your support offers hope and healing to our tiniest patients.



When Erika first saw her tiny newborn Oliver (Ollie), she had no idea he would go on to spend 159 days in Mater Mothers' Neonatal Critical Care Unit (NCCU). What she did know however, was that he would have to fight to survive.

"His little legs were the size of my pinkie. Everything was so skinny, and his skin was see-through—you could see every vein..."

A week after her waters broke at just 23 weeks' gestation, her unborn baby went into distress and Erika was rushed in for an emergency caesarean under general anaesthetic.

"When I finally saw him four hours later, it was such a shock. He was on a ventilator, there were tubes everywhere. It was very, very scary," she said.

"There were three nurses helping me have my first skin-to-skin cuddle because he was so fragile, they had to manoeuvre him so carefully. But it was the most precious moment. It was amazing."

Baby Ollie was just 27.5 centimetres long—half the length of many full-term babies—and weighed a tiny 520 grams. He was one of the smallest babies delivered at Mater Mothers' in 2022, and one of just nine surviving babies born at 23 weeks' gestation.

At 19 years old, Erika, along with partner Lachlan, 20, had barely enough time to adjust to pregnancy, let alone having a baby on life support in the NCCU.

"It's so hard because no one my age, no one I know has experienced anything like this and of course they don't understand, and it's still so hard for me to even think about, what he went through," Erika said.

Having to leave Ollie behind every night to go home was one of the most difficult experiences for the young parents.

"I was there every day, but every time I had to leave him, I was terrified we'd lose him. It was a rollercoaster. I would cry every single day. There were a few times he stopped breathing... watching him go through that was the hardest part. You just feel

As many as one quarter of babies born as early as Ollie may experience a disability. His development will continue to be closely monitored, including specific testing at two, and four years

But for the time being, Erika and Lachlan have just celebrated Ollie's first birthday and are looking forward to him gradually being weaned off supplemental oxygen.

"It will take some time yet before he can walk, but I can't wait to see him running around without his oxygen tank and just playing with the other kids his age. That will be the best."

When you buy tickets in Mater Prize Home, you are helping to support vital medical research, equipment and patient care, bringing hope and healing to patients like baby Ollie.

Thank you. You are changing lives with every ticket!

Buy your tickets at <u>materlotteries.com.au</u> — Thank you for your support!

YOUR SUPPORT IS changing lives with every ticket 💜 ... AND IT COULD CHANGE YOURS TOO!

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QLD on winning this \$3.19M First Prize Package, where her 'Forever Starts Now'!

Winning Ticket Number: 5286771



Congratulations, Mr G from Coomera, QLD who is 'Living Large' after winning this \$3.5M First Prize Package!

Winning Ticket Number: 843631

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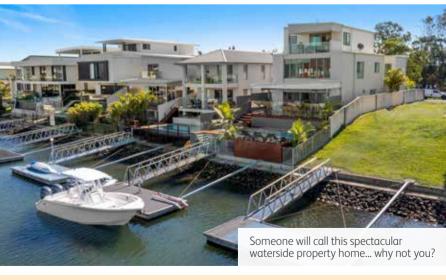












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