

# More teen mums

By social affairs writer  
LISA MAYOH

AT 16, most teenagers are still children themselves, struggling with school assignments and what to wear on the weekend.

Others — like Terrey Hills mum Cathy Mellor — are among more than 30,600 NSW teenagers that have become parents in the past nine years.

Ms Mellor's life changed two years ago, when she became pregnant with son Emilio at the tender age of 16.

Now 18, she is happily raising her 15-month-old son — and she's not alone.

Almost 2000 teenage mums

have given birth this year, the latest figures from the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages show.

The figures show 1878 mums aged 13 to 19 have already made up 3.1 per cent of the 58,709 births, with a growing number of expectant teens seeking support from the minimal services available in Sydney.

Ms Mellor said having a child so young was a



Joy: Emilio and Cathy

hard experience, with other first-time parents at least 10 years older than her.

"It was a hard time, but everything to do with the actual pregnancy was a really good experience," she said.

"But at the hospital I felt like I couldn't talk to anyone, and the other girls were at least 25.

"I have no regrets, and if you are really dedicated you can achieve it. "I'd tell other young mums not to be

ashamed, but to feel proud and just go with it."

In the past nine years, the youngest child to become a mother was only 11 and six aged 12 have become parents in the same period.

There have been no pre-teen births this year, but a 12-year-old is due to give birth this month in western NSW.

The girl, who was allowed to live with her 15-year-old boyfriend despite her father's pleas to DoCS, is due to give birth in coming weeks.

Last year 3221 girls gave birth to children before their 19th birthday, making up 3.4 per cent of the total births, up from 3076 the year before.