

# Twins inspire support group

By Cameron Tait

CHARLOTTE and Lily Eads are two very special girls.

Born at 24 weeks, they weighed just 667 and 685 grams respectively, and spent the first six weeks of their lives in intensive care.

Their mother, Emma, said while one twin was hooked up to oxygen 24 hours a day and an apnoea monitor to alert doctors if she stopped breathing, the other required high doses of medication.

Lily was born naturally and Charlotte was delivered by caesarean section.

Doctors believe their early arrival was because of the high-risk pregnancy, which may have been too much for Mrs Eads' body.

"Before they were born, we were told the twins only had a 58 per cent chance of survival if they were delivered at 24 weeks," Mrs Eads said.

"While the girls were in hospital, we had one of our children at school and the other at kindergarten, so it was a balancing act.

"They were on ventilators and hooked up to cords and tubes,

**'Before they were born, we were told the twins only had a 58 per cent chance of survival if they were delivered at 24 weeks . . . Everything they do throughout their lives will be special in our eyes.'**

Emma Eads

and sometimes they weren't well enough to hold."

The Eads already had two young children, Brody and Ella, but when they brought the twins home for the first time after more than three months, it was a confronting experience.

"When we brought them home, we were very protective, especially around people who were sick, because if they picked up a cold, it could easily turn into something worse.

"It got to the point where one always seemed to be doing well, while the other had the setbacks.

"[But] they didn't get too many infections, and they've recovered to the point where our

pediatrician calls them 'miracle babies'."

Mrs Eads joined Life's Little Treasures in Chadstone, a support group for parents of premature babies going through the same rollercoaster ride of intensive care and special care nurseries.

However, with limited resources for parents of premature babies in Wyndham, Mrs Eads has decided to start a new group closer to home.

"They're amazing girls; Charlotte has started to walk and Lily has taken a few steps.

"Both my husband and myself check on them before we go to bed, and we always walk out of their room with smiles on our faces.

"Everything they do throughout their lives will be special in our eyes."

■ The first meeting of Life's Little Treasures is from noon-1.30 on Tuesday, March 18 at the Grange Community Centre, Hogans Road, Hoppers Crossing.

For details, call Emma Eads on 0400637782.

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**'Miracle babies':** Emma Eads with her twins Charlotte, front, and Lily, has formed a support group for parents of premature babies. **Picture: Lucy Aulich**