

Submission: Midwifery Matters – The Tasmanian Midwifery Strategy 2025–2030

1: Does *Midwifery Matters – The Tasmanian Midwifery Strategy* provide an appropriate vision for midwifery and midwifery-led care in Tasmania?

Midwifery Matters provides a strong and appropriate vision for midwifery and continuity of midwifery carer in Tasmania. The document's emphasis on consumer engagement and woman-centred care is commendable and aligns with contemporary national priorities.

However, given its broad focus on maternity care and its relevance to the entire perinatal workforce, we recommend that *Midwifery Matters* be reframed as a **Tasmanian Maternity Strategy**—one that incorporates midwifery workforce issues within a holistic maternity care context. This approach would ensure greater alignment with the Australian Government's National Health Workforce Strategy and reduce duplication of effort.

While the strategy rightly identifies midwifery scope of practice, continuity of midwifery carer, workforce attraction and retention, and respectful maternity care as priorities, these goals cannot be fully achieved without explicit **collaboration with the obstetric workforce**. Multidisciplinary integration is essential to achieving truly respectful, safe, and woman-centred care.

Tasmania also has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership by outlining how it intends to implement the **National Woman-Centred Care Maternity Strategy**, which was developed through extensive consumer consultation and provides a strong foundation for reform.

We note the reference to the **Queensland Clinical Guidelines**, which are used by both obstetric and midwifery workforces. Queensland has successfully introduced multidisciplinary simulation and birth training to strengthen informed decision-making and teamwork. We recommend that Tasmania consider adopting or adapting similar programs to promote **collaboration, respect, and woman-centred practice** across all maternity providers.

2: Do the suggested Actions provide a path forward for midwifery in Tasmania?

Yes, the proposed actions provide a constructive path forward. However, we note that similar strategies in other jurisdictions have often lacked robust implementation, monitoring, and evaluation frameworks. To ensure accountability and continuous improvement, we strongly recommend that **measurable targets, timelines, and performance indicators** be included and that **progress reports be made publicly available**.

3: Do you have any suggested additions to the content or actions within *Midwifery Matters – The Tasmanian Midwifery Strategy*?

We recommend that the strategy be expanded and renamed the **Tasmanian Maternity Strategy**, encompassing the full maternity workforce. Effective, woman-centred care relies on collaboration between midwives, obstetricians, general practitioners, and allied health professionals. Excluding key contributors risks fragmentation and limits the potential for system-wide cultural reform.

To strengthen consumer feedback and accountability, we recommend that Tasmania adopt **validated tools** to assess women’s experiences of Respectful Maternity Care, such as the **Mother’s Autonomy in Decision Making (MADM)** scale and the **Mothers on Respect Index (MORi)**—both of which were endorsed in the 2023 review of the National Woman-Centred Care Maternity Strategy.

Every maternity service should also establish a **Maternity Advisory Committee** to ensure services reflect consumer expectations and that feedback directly informs quality improvement processes. This should complement, rather than replace, the work of the existing Maternity Services Women’s Health Advisory Group.

Transparent data collection is essential for service improvement. We recommend that each maternity service publish outcomes, including **Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs)** and **Patient-Reported Experience Measures (PREMs)**. The **Queensland “Inform My Care” website** provides a strong model for consideration, as do the **NSW and Victorian Mothers and Babies Reports**, which publish hospital-level maternity outcome data.

4: Do you have any other comments in relation to *Midwifery Matters – The Tasmanian Midwifery Strategy*?

The Maternity Consumer Network (MCN) commends the Department of Health Tasmania for developing *Midwifery Matters: Tasmanian Midwifery Workforce Strategy 2025–2030* and for its commitment to fostering a **trauma-informed, woman-centred, and respectful maternity system**.

The planned **collaboration with the University of Tasmania to develop a Respectful Care Framework** embedding women’s voices and rights in maternity services is commendable, however this may be a duplication.

As a national consumer advocacy organisation, the MCN has already developed an **evidence-based Respectful Maternity Care training program**, co-designed with consumers and informed by women’s lived experiences. This program has been successfully implemented across more than 60 maternity services nationally and has formal ethics approval for evaluation. Feedback indicates that **over 90% of participants rated the training 8–10/10** in terms of professional value.

To avoid duplication and build on established, consumer-led initiatives, we propose that the **Department of Health Tasmania collaborate with the MCN** in developing and delivering the Tasmanian Respectful Care Framework. Such a partnership would ensure the framework is **authentically grounded in consumer experience** and aligned with the strategy's commitment to "hearing, valuing, and centring the voices of women."

This collaboration would provide an efficient and impactful means of achieving shared goals and advancing respectful, woman-centred maternity care in Tasmania.

We thank the Department of Health Tasmania for the opportunity to provide feedback and would welcome the chance to discuss this proposal further.

Kind regards,

Maternity Consumer Network Committee

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