

MATERNAL HEALTH MATTERS INC
MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Friday 10 December 2021

1. **Present** Joan Garvan, Mary Kirk, Declan O’Keeffe, Ellen O’Keeffe, Vanessa Owen, Vanessa Bakker, Emma Monagle
2. **Apologies** Daniel O’Keeffe, Julia Willoughby, Clare Wolski,
3. **Minutes** 2021 Annual General Meeting, voted to adopt the 2020 AGM minutes
Proposed by: Joan Garvan
Seconded by: Mary Kirk

4. **Reports**

4.1 **President’s Report - Ms Ellen O’Keeffe**

COVID continued to impact significantly on our hopes for the year. Nevertheless, we have pressed on and have had some significant achievements.

The centrality of women in every community means that the impact of preventable conditions are far-reaching, affecting the entire community, let alone the woman herself. Access to respectful, appropriate, safe, woman centered care during pregnancy, labour, birth and the postpartum are the expectations of our communities, yet often not realised.

The discussion that surrounds achieving respectful maternity care focuses on the overwhelming dilemma of inequity, ending violence against women, the lack of respect for basic human rights and the poor health outcomes for women and their infants.

We started the year with a name change. This process is officially complete. With the name change we reviewed our governance policies and induction processes – thank you to Joan for leading that exercise. We also reviewed our [strategic plan](#). Thank you to Mary for leading that process. We have reviewed our [Position Statements](#) and added to the suite a Reconciliation Statement, The First 1000 Days Statement and an Uluru Statement from the Heart.



We hosted a Birth Time viewing in Canberra. It was well attended and the discussion that followed was informative and enlightening. Alicia Payne, an ACT representative in the federal parliament spoke of her concerns and possible actions to achieve safe and respectful maternity care. Thank you, Alicia, for your support.

We conducted our second dignity survey and reported it as [The Mother's Tale – Women's' Experience of Maternity care in Australia](#). Overall, there was no real improvement found with only 54.4% of women we surveyed having the birth they wanted, compared to 62% of the women in the 2016 survey. Of interest is the growing awareness of the need for respectful maternity care and women's' awareness that they have choices. In this survey, nineteen women reported changing models of care during pregnancy, and we also saw a rise in the reporting of free birthing.

The survey gave consumers of maternity care an opportunity to provide free text feedback. 537 women offered suggestions and four themes emerged:

1. Provide respectful maternity care;
2. Provide continuity of care, preferably with a known midwife;
3. Improve postnatal care; and
4. Provide information on care options.

In response to the findings, Maternal Health Matters developed the [Maternal Health Toolbox](#). The toolbox explores:

- What are the elements of maternity care?
- Who provides maternity care in Australia? Your health professional options.
- Choosing your health professional.
- Where to give birth to your baby — your choices.
- The Pregnancy Care Checklist — Australia.

We are particularly proud of [The Pregnancy Care Checklist](#) — Australia. For the first time, Women in Australia have a tool, based on best available evidence to assist them to receive respectful maternity care. It is hoped that they will use this checklist to prepare for each antenatal visit so they can be confident they are receiving the right level of care. The Checklist is based on the Australian Clinical Practice Guidelines - Pregnancy Care.

In conjunction with Canberra Mothercraft Society, we launched - [Right Birth - Your Choice](#), a video with the aim of raising awareness in the community on what is appropriate and respectful maternity care. We have also completed the script for a Right –Birth your choice self-directed learning package that will be delivered in 2022. Thank you to Mary, Vanessa and Emma for your work on this project.

We have advocated rigorously this year to raise political awareness for social and economic change. It is an ongoing struggle due to the perception that Australia is a safe place to give birth, because women do not die. Yet, mainstream maternity systems based on traditional medical models continue to fail to meet the needs and values of women and their community. Improving outcomes in maternity care requires a primary health model of care, that is a wellness model, through redistribution of funds to evidenced based care, monitoring of outcomes through client reported outcomes of care, system monitoring and accountability through accreditation

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systems, education and credentialing of maternity professionals on Respectful Maternity Care, service redesign so the services are arranged around the woman, and staff conditions that foster partnership and respect rather than hierarchy is the key to achieving respectful maternity care. Thank you to Mary and Joan for their commitment to advocacy.

In preparation for the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety, we wrote to all relevant Politian's, like organisations and public servants to remind them that the Women's Safety Summit must include maternity care and address concerns in any future plan. [Please see our news item](#). Joan was particularly active through Equality Rights Alliance.

Finally, we are in the throes of planning a seminar series next year. Watch this space.

I thank the board for their patience and commitment to the ongoing work in the promotion of best practice for maternal health across Australia.

4.2 Treasurer's Report - Mr Declan O'Keeffe

Balance Sheet - For the Period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

	Assets	\$
Current Assets		2770.75
Non Current Assets		0.00
Total Assets		
	Liabilities	\$
Current Liabilities		0.00
Non Current Liabilities		0.00
Total Liabilities		0.00
Net Assets		
Equity		2770.75
Opening Balance	4224.20	4224.20
Net Surplus (deficit) for the period		1453.45
TOTAL Equity		2770.75

Income and Expenditure - 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

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		\$	\$	\$
1/07/2021	Balance Carried Forward			4224.20
	Income			
18/2/21	GST Refund	81.00		
	Donations	0.00		
	<i>Total Income</i>		81.00	
	Expenditure			
17/9/2020	Survey Monkey	261.82		
9 /9/2020	GoDaddy – Wordpress Website Management	117.48		
10 /10/2020	Envato – Website Design Package	99.22		
22/11/ 2020	GoDaddy - Web Hosting	193.49		
13/5/2021	AON - Directors and Office Bearers Insurance	833.44		
3/6/2021	Refund – Cheque No 000060	29.00		
	<i>Total Expenditure</i>		-1534.45	
30/6/2021	Operating surplus for the year			2770.75

In the opinion of the Board the financial report:

- Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Maternal Health Matters Inc. at 30 June 2021 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1991
- At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Maternal Health Matters Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Thank you to our Treasurer, Declan O’Keeffe.

Vote to accept the reports: Proposed by: Mary Kirk. Seconded by: Joan Garvan

5. Election of Board Members

Declan O’Keeffe and Toni Hackett resigned from the Board and the board extends it sincere thanks for their contributions to our work.



Catherine Bell, Emma Monagle and Vanessa Bakker's term on the Board expires. All have nominated to stay on the Board

Following the acceptances of nomination from Vanessa Owen, there are no temporary vacancies.

Mary Kirk's nomination as Treasurer was accepted by Ellen O'Keeffe and seconded by Vanessa Baker..

6. AGM Meeting Closure 1030.