



Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Background

Established in 2009 (as White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood Australia), *Maternal Health Matters* is a growing community who value responsive, sensitive maternity care systems that cater for the individual woman and respect her human rights.

Our Vision

Maternal Health Matters now and into the future as healthy girls make healthy women make health babies make healthy nations.

Our Purpose

To ensure all women receive respectful maternity care. That is respect for women's autonomy, dignity, feelings, choices, and preferences. It is care that delivers better maternal health outcomes and a better maternity care experience.

Why

While some areas of the current maternity care system perform well, overall it does not deliver optimum care in an evidenced-based, respectful, equitable and efficient way. This is creating health, economic and social inequities for Australian women, who, for the most part, continue to shoulder the majority of child raising responsibilities.

If we are to achieve the best possible start to mothering for women and their children, we must design a maternity care system that works for women and provides Respectful Maternity Care.

Our focus

Maternal Health Matters places a high value on: promoting physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing for childbearing women so as to strengthen maternal health; resilience and confidence; and achieving effective outcomes for women, their children and families.

Maternal Health Matters promotes:

- respectful maternity care for all women;
- the social and economic value of optimal maternal health;
- working collaboratively to improve the health and well-being of women and their children;
- maternal health policy and services informed by the social determinants of health and founded on the principles and practices of primary health care; and
- service delivery that is equitable, culturally safe, based on reliable evidence, timely and focused on the needs of the woman.



What we do

Maternal Health Matters works with communities, other organisations and governments to improve maternal health outcomes for all women in Australia.

We do this by:

- advancing the goals of *Maternal Health Matters* at all levels;
- respecting, protecting and encouraging individual, gender, cultural and social diversity;
- educating all people irrespective of their origins, age and circumstances;
- researching and sharing good practices to advance Maternal Health and well-being for the benefit of all generations; and
- directing attention to the benefits to be gained by addressing the economic and social disadvantage for women and girls, created by the lack of access to respectful maternity care.

Our Values

- **Respect** – due regards for the feelings, wishes, or rights of women.
 - *Collaboration* - maternity care professionals working cooperatively with women, sharing information, sharing responsibility.
 - *Consumer Voice* – Women shaping policy, planning, service provision and evaluation by collaboratively working towards a shared vision for maternity care
 - *Choice* – a range of reliable evidence based options of maternity care from which a woman can choose.
- **Dignity** - the right of a woman to be valued and respected for her own sake, the state or quality of being worthy of honour or respect.
 - *Compassion* – sensitive to the experience of birthing women, combined with a willingness to help and promote their well-being
 - *Equity* - the absence of avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically.
- **Autonomy** - focusing on the woman and respecting her power and control over her own life and her own care.
 - *Continuity of carer* - Care from a known midwife and or doctor to ensure reliable evidenced based care founded on a relationship of mutual trust and respect in line with the woman's decisions.
 - *Consent* – the process of informed decision and permission granted by the woman, with full knowledge of the possible consequences



Our Work 2021 - 2026

Maternal Health Matters' priorities are:

STRATEGY ONE: Maternal Health across the Lifespan

Women as mothers are socially valued

Address the inequities through:

- Acknowledging pregnant, birthing and postnatal women are experts in their own lives.
- Acknowledging the inversion of power in maternal health care.
- Raise awareness of violence against and coercive control of women in healthcare and society.
- Involving both men and women in maternal and reproductive health.
- Protect girls by raising awareness the effects of child marriage and early reproduction.
- Take action to promote maternal health by reducing socioeconomic inequalities.

Achieve intergenerational safe motherhood

Equity of access to:

- Sexual and reproductive health education and services based on reliable evidence.
- Fertility management and contraception.
- Maternity services based on the principles and practices of primary health.
- Maternity Care professionals who are regulated and work in partnership with woman.

STRATEGY TWO: Women Centred Policy and Services

- Maternal health policies, planning and services based on reliable evidence.
- Maternal health services designed to deliver care in the right place, at the right time and with the right health professional, in a manner that is acceptable to the woman.
- Access to quality maternity services – safe, effective, appropriate, woman-centred, timely, efficient, and equitable.
- Fully financed reliable evidenced based national maternal health strategies to promote the health of the woman and newborn.

STRATEGY THREE: Education and Regulation

- Development and delivery of Respectful Maternity Care Education Programs for the community and relevant health professionals.
- Regulations for a flexible workforce who can all work to their full scope of practice.



STRATEGY FOUR: Be a robust and respected organisation

A forward thinking organisation that promotes best health outcomes for woman seeking maternity care.

- 4.1 Governance
 - Comply with all legal requirements.
 - Contemporary management of an NGO.
 - Sound leadership by a skilled Board.
- 4.2 Resources
 - Short term viability.
 - Long term viability.
- 4.3 Marketing & communications
 - Maintain Strategic Alliance
 - Maintain effective relationships with the media.
 - Productive relationships with governments and other related organisations.
 - Demonstrate judicious use of social media.

Strategy	Action 1	Action 2
Maternal Health Across the Lifespan	Consumer Tool - Checklist based on Pregnancy Care Guidelines	First 1000 days program
Women Centred Policy and Services	Implementation of Woman-centred care: Strategic directions for Australian maternity services	Inform the community of the WHO Labour Care Guide.
Education and Regulation	Right Birth Your Choice Education Package	Health Professional Respectful Maternity Care Education Package
A robust and respected organisation	Contemporary best practice governance.	Diverse membership base and sound leadership by a skilled Board.