Maternal Health Matters Inc. Annual Report 2026

Presidents Report

In providing this Annual Report we acknowledge and pay respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, who are the custodians of the land and of the oldest continuous living culture on Earth. We honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ongoing connection to sea, waterways, and Country. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

Women are central to every community, and the impacts of preventable adverse outcomes extend beyond the individual to families and communities. Respectful, safe, appropriate and woman-centred care throughout pregnancy, labour, birth and the postpartum period is an expectation, yet remains unrealised for many women. The growing focus on respectful maternity care reflects increasing recognition of inequity, violence against women, violations of fundamental human rights and poor health outcomes for women and their infants.

This year proved to yet again to be challenging and rewarding. Our Board adopts a governance model rooted in stewardship, with a clear commitment to focusing on strategic, long-term priorities and outcomes aligned with its mission

We have continued to advocate for maternity services that promote the full wellbeing of women. We have met with politicians, health departments and like-minded organisations. The is an increasing awareness that reform is required, and that the wellbeing of mothers is the bellwether for the wellbeing of our community. Thank you to Vanessa, and Joan for your commitment to advocacy.

The ANU Gender Institute and Maternal Health Matters Inc. have collaborated to deliver a Seminar Series - *Maternal Health the Hidden Public Health Epidemic*, which explores the impact of maternity on women's wellbeing and the transition to parenting, as we know the postnatal period is neglected in current models of care. This year we held a seminar in August 2025, *NSW Birth Trauma Report – next steps and policy* The NSW report into Birth Trauma concluded that just over thirty thousand women potentially experience obstetric violence every year in NSW, this is: mistreatment and violence against women experienced during facility-based childbirth and in other reproductive health services. This includes physical violence, loss of autonomy; being subjected to any clinical intervention without appropriate informed consent; being shouted at, scolded, humiliated, or threatened; and being ignored, refused, or receiving no response to requests for help. It may also include non-evidence-based practices, such as routine episiotomy and lack of access to physiological birth. Four priorities will be outlines so as to reduce preventable birth trauma, this includes: the provision of evidence-based trauma informed care training; the expansion and sustained midwifery Continuity of Care models across Australia; midwifery leadership at every level of health care, and the appointment of a Chief Midwife; along with the recognition and use of the notion of 'obstetric violence' to promote healing and action. Society needs to provide maternity services that do no harm and honours the woman's human right to respect, autonomy, dignity and the attainment of the highest level of health..
I would like to acknowledge Joan's work to achieve the seminar series.

Parliamentary friends for Maternal Health. The group was established in June 2023. It is intended that the Group will provide a non-partisan forum for parliamentarians to meet and interact with consumer and non-government organisations on matters relating to maternal health and care during pregnancy and transitioning to mothering and the issues faced by women receiving maternity care, and what the parliament can do address this. The Co-Chairs are Ms Alicia Payne MP, Ms Helen Haines MP, and Mr Dave Sharma MP. We welcome their support enhancing maternal health and achieving respectful maternity care. In this year we hosted one Parliamentary Friends Forum on 3 March 2026, the forum explored how to protect and restore rural birthing services, ensuring every woman has the opportunity to birth safely, locally, and with dignity. Rural women's own experiences of accessing perinatal care and examines why local maternity services save lives, prevents avoidable harm from long distance travel, and upholds the principles of equity, fairness, choice and respect; most especially for First Nations families, low-income households, and migrant and remote communities. Local birthing is core community infrastructure: it keeps families close to home, strengthens towns, and ensures babies have a safe start in life. Rural women and their babies continue to face poorer perinatal outcomes than those in cities, an inequity that has persisted for decades. With nearly half of rural maternity units closed since 1992, communities are losing far more than a health service. Professor Jenny May AM, Dr Marian Dover, Ms Whitney Fordham, and Ms Melanie Briggs presented. Thank you.

We continue the Maternal Health E-news, to provide our members with a diverse variety of evidenced resources and community news. We intend to provide a monthly newsletter, however as a volunteer-run organisation, sometimes our resources are stretched and as a consequence we occasionally wrote a bi-monthly newsletter. We have published ten newsletters this year. Thank you to all who have provided articles for inclusion and for the positive feedback we have received.

We continue to advocate for a Clinical Standard for Maternity Care which will define the systems required by health service organisations to monitor the provision of appropriate care, review performance, and make improvements in the care provided, that can be evaluated during health service accreditation. While accreditation, does not guarantee that no one will experience disrespectful and unsafe maternity care, it ensures safety and quality systems are in place that promote respectful and safe care.

This year we made submissions to public enquires, responded to relevant surveys and participated in meetings including:

- Contributed to the stakeholder consultation on a 'low-risk' definition for professional indemnity insurance for privately practicing midwives.
- Disability Rights Connect
- National Preterm Birth Prevention Program
- Australian Association for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health
- Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of microplastics and other toxics on human health. We focused on formula and ultra-processed food.
- ACT Maternity in Focus Advisory Group
- Submission to the Consultation on the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (Third Edition)
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

I would like to acknowledge Karel Williams' contribution to the Board in her role as First Nations Women's Advisor. Also, I would like to acknowledge Frances Bilbao's contribution to the Board in her role as Mental Health Advisor.

Chami Jayasuriya is leaving the Board. Thank you, Chami.

I thank the board, Katie, Joan, Bianca, Chami, Vanessa, Mary and Vanessa for their patience and commitment to the ongoing work in the promotion of best practice for maternal health across Australia.

Ellen O'Keeffe
President

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present a positive FY 25/26 financial report.

The organisation has maintained a sound financial position, providing a strong foundation for continued operations and future priorities.

- Current Assets are $10,442.93
- Current Liabilities are $0.
- The operating surplus for FY25/26 was $5,134.68

We are a volunteer organisation and rely on donations to finance our activity. This year we received a generous donation from Canberra Mothercraft Society, to enable us to continue to support Parliamentary Friends for Maternal Health. We also received donations from Ellen O'Keeffe and an anonymous donation from PayPal.

We are in the process of changing banks and updating Board signatories to reflect the current Board member and Executive roles and increase transparency over accounts.

We were notified in June 2026 that we are to receive a 2025-26 Volunteer Grants to cover Directors and Office Bearers Insurance and Board Education on contemporary governance. This will be reflected in the 2026 to 2027 financial reports.

I am pleased to confirm that the organisation remains in a firm financial position. While we are in a healthy position, we will continue to exercise appropriate financial discipline, monitor our commitments and ensure that our resources are used effectively to support our objectives.

I would like to thank the Board and everyone who has contributed to the organisation's financial oversight throughout the year. I commend the financial report to the members and welcome any questions.

Katie Petrie

Treasurer

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2026

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Maternal Health Matters Inc.
ABN 83143292475
GPO Box 165 Canberra ACT 2601
info@maternalhealthmatters.org.au
https://maternalhealthmatters.org.au/
0413 225 910

Board Members Report

The members of the Board of Maternal Health Matters Inc present their report for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.

Directors
The names of the persons who were members of the Board at any time of the year and at the date of this report are as follows:

Ms Ellen O'Keeffe	Ms Vanessa Bakker	Dr Joan Garvan	
Dr Bianca Williams	Ms Katie Petrie	Ms Vaness Owen	Dr Chami Jayasuriya

Principle Activity
Maternal Health Matters is committed to influencing and supporting the delivery of policies and services for the well-being of women seeking maternity care through the adoption of the Respectful Maternity Care Charter. We work with communities, health services and governments to improve maternal health outcomes for all women in Australia.

Significant Changes
No significant changes in the nature of these activities occurred during the year

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Board and on behalf of the Board





E O'Keeffe
Interim President
Canberra
5 Oct 2026

Katie Petrie
Treasurer
Melbourne
5 Oct 2026

Income and Expenditure

General operating– for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Income	2025 - 2026
Donations	13,799.76
GST Refund	744.00
Income	0
Total	14,543.76
Expenditure	
Donation	500.00
Gratuities	0
Projects	4027.43
Admin	3,902.94
Cheques carried over from 2025	(978.71)
Cheque yet to be cashed in 2026	605.00
Total	**9409.08**
Profit (Loss)	**$5,134.68**

Balance Sheet - For the Period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

	Assets	**$**
Current Assets		11,047.93
Non-Current Assets		0.00
Total Assets		11,047.93
	Liabilities	$
Current Liabilities		605.00
Non-Current Liabilities		0
Total Liabilities		605.00
Net Assets		10,442.93
Equity		10,442.93
Opening Balance		5308.25
Net Surplus (deficit) for the period		**$5134.68**
TOTAL Equity		$10,442.93

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Donors - for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

PayPal
Ellen O'Keeffe
Canberra Mothercraft Society
PayPal

Cash Flow Statement - For the Period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

Cash flows from operating activities		$
Balance carried forward		5308.25
Income – GST Refund		744.00
Donations		13,799.76
Income - Invoices		0
Net expenditure from operating activities		(9409.08)
Cash at 30 June 2026		$10,442.93

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2026

Summary of significant accounting polices

The body was formed in 2009 and is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1991, ACT. It is registered on the Australian Business Register. The Australian Business Number is 3143292475. The incorporation is registered for Goods & Services Tax purposes. The incorporation is registered as an income tax exempt charity, as a deductible gift recipient and is registered as a charity with the Australian Charites and Nor-for-profits Commission.

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of Division 60 of the Australian Charites and Nor-for-profits Commission Act 2012. The Board has determined that Maternal Health Matters is a small charity and therefore not a reporting entity.

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the notes to financial statements and the following Australian Accounting Standards:

- AASB 101, Presentation of Financial Statements
- AASB 108, Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors
- AASB 1048, Interpretation of Standards
- AASB 1054, Australian Additional Disclosures

The financial report has been prepared on a cash basis. The following accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous reporting period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in preparation of this financial report.

- **Income Tax** - The incorporation is registered as an income tax exempt charity with the Australian Taxation Office. Consequently, no provision for taxation has been made in the financial statements.
- **Cash and Cash Equivalents** – includes cash on hand and deposits held at call with financial institutions.
- **Trade and other creditors** – represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the incorporation to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid.
- **Investments** – The incorporation has no investments.

Audit Report 2025 -2026

Maternal Health Matters Inc
GPO Box 165
CANBERRA ACT 2601
1 October 2026

AUDIT REPORT

I have audited the Financial Records of Maternal Health Matters Incorporated for the year ending 30 June 2026. The Maternal Health Matters Inc. is responsible for the preparation and true and fair presentation of the organisation's Financial Report. This includes the responsibility for the maintenance of adequate accounting records and internal controls that are designed to prevent and detect fraud and error, and for the accounting policies and accounting estimates inherent in the Financial Reports.

I performed procedures to assess whether in all material respects, the Financial Report presents fairly the Financial Position of the organisation as at 30 June 2026, and its Financial Performance for the year ended at that date. One anomaly was noted. Cheque number 78, was made out for $605, when it should have been $600. A request has been made for the $5 to be refunded and this will be reflected in the 2026-2027 Financial Report.

AUDIT OPINION

In my opinion the Financial Report of Maternal Health Matters Incorporated gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation at 30 June 2026, and of its performance for the year ended on that date.

Sincerely,



Daniel O'Keeffe BExPhys

Statement by the Board for the year ended 30 June 2026

Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2026

Statement by the Board

In the opinion of the Board the financial report:

Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Maternal Health Matters Inc incorporated at 30 June 2026and 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.

This statement is signed for and on behalf of the Board



Ellen O'Keeffe
Interim President
Canberra
5 Oct 2026



Katie Petrie
Treasurer
Melbourne
5 Oct 2026