**Alesia Bradow u3138458**

**Room for improvement - A freestanding birth centre for Canberra.**

Intended place of birth plays a significant role in perinatal outcomes for women and their families. Birth centres that provide midwifery-led continuity of care have less intervention, improved birth outcomes, and higher rates of breastfeeding initiation. At present, only a small percentage of Australians can secure a place within existing birth centre programs. Expanding access to birth centres with this model of care would assist with the nation’s increasing birth intervention and caesarean section rate and contribute towards improved outcomes and experiences for women and their families.

In partnership with The University of Canberra, utilising stakeholder consultation, a purpose-built freestanding birth centre will be commissioned in response to these concerns in the Australian Capital Territory. This facility will enable more women to access the continuity of midwifery led care they desire while delivering additional support for culturally and linguistically diverse women, First Nations families who wish to Birth on Country, and at-risk families. With numerous multi-disciplinary services on offer, this will be a transformative step towards goals outlined in the Australian Capital Territory’s *Maternity in Focus* plan.

To evaluate success, qualitative and quantitative research will be conducted exploring outcomes and experiences for those who use birth centre services, as well as students and staff involved in its operation.

On evaluation, it is expected the birth centre will have a positive impact on the experiences and outcomes for women and their families and will be a valuable addition to both the healthcare and education landscapes of Canberra and surrounds.

**References:**

ACT Health. (2022). *Maternity in focus: The ACT public maternity system plan 2022-2032*. ACT Government. <https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/maternity-focus>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). *Australia's mothers and babies.* The Australian Government. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mothers-babies/australias-mothers-babies>

Dahlen, H. G., Downe, S., Jackson, M., Priddis, H., de Jonge, A., & Schmied, V. (2021). An ethnographic study of the interaction between philosophy of childbirth and place of birth. *Women and Birth, 34*(6), e557–e566. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1016/j.wombi.2020.10.008>

Homer, C. S. E., Cheah, S. L., Rossiter, C., Dahlen, H. G., Ellwood, D., Foureur, M. J., Forster, D. A., McLachlan, H. L., Oats, J. J. N., Sibbritt, D., Thornton, C., & Scarf, V. L. (2019). Maternal and perinatal outcomes by planned place of birth in Australia 2000 - 2012: a linked population data study. *BMJ Open, 9*(10), e029192. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029192>

Homer, C. S. E., Thornton, C., Scarf, V. L., Ellwood, D. A., Oats, J. J. N., Foureur, M. J., Sibbritt, D., McLachlan, H. L., Forster, D. A., & Dahlen, H. G. (2014). Birthplace in New South Wales, Australia: an analysis of perinatal outcomes using routinely collected data. *BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth, 14*(1), 1–12. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1186/1471-2393-14-206>

Jefford, E., Nolan, S. J., Sansone, H., & Provost, S. C. (2020). “A match made in midwifery”: Women’s perceptions of student midwife partnerships. *Women and Birth, 33*(2), 193–198. <https://doiorg.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1016/j.wombi.2018.11.018>

Laws, P. J., Xu, F., Welsh, A., Tracy, S. K., & Sullivan, E. A. (2014). Maternal morbidity of women receiving birth centre care in New South Wales: A matched‐pair analysis using linked health data. *Birth: Issues in Perinatal Care, 41*(3), 268–275. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1111/birt.12114>

Monk, A. R., Grigg, C. P., Foureur, M., Tracy, M., & Tracy, S. K. (2017). Freestanding midwifery units: Maternal and neonatal outcomes following transfer. *Midwifery, 46*, 24–28. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1016/j.midw.2017.01.006>

Newton, M., Faulks, F., Bailey, C., Davis, J., Vermeulen, M., Tremayne, A., & Kruger, G. (2021). Continuity of care experiences: A national cross-sectional survey exploring the views and experiences of Australian students and academics. *Women and Birth, 35*(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2021.05.009>

Scarf, V. L., Viney, R., Yu, S., Foureur, M., Rossiter, C., Dahlen, H., Thornton, C., Cheah, S. L., & Homer, C. S. E. (2019). Mapping the trajectories for women and their babies from births planned at home, in a birth centre or in a hospital in New South Wales, Australia, between 2000 and 2012. *BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth, 19*(1), 1–11. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1186/s12884-019-2584-0>

Tickle, N., Gamble, J., & Creedy, D. K. (2021). Women’s reports of satisfaction and respect with continuity of care experiences by students: Findings from a routine, online survey. *Women and Birth, 34*(6), e592–e598. https://doiorg.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1016/j.wombi.2020.11.004

Tickle, N., Gamble, J., & Creedy, D. K. (2022). Clinical outcomes for women who had continuity of care experiences with midwifery students. *Women and Birth, 35*(2), 184–192. <https://doiorg.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1016/j.wombi.2021.04.004>

Yu, S., Fiebig, D. G., Scarf, V., Viney, R., Dahlen, H. G., & Homer, C. (2020). Birth models of care and intervention rates: The impact of birth centres. *Health Policy, 124*(12), 1395–1402. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.canberra.edu.au/10.1016/j.healthpol.2020.10.001>