



Australian College of  
**Midwives**

ACM: For midwives. With women. For the future.

# **Interim Position Statement**

**Respectful Maternity Care**  
(Incorporating Birth Trauma and Obstetric Violence)

Issued: October 2023

## The Australian College of Midwives interim position on respectful maternity care

The Australian College of Midwives (ACM) is the **national peak professional body for midwives in Australia** and supports continuous improvement of the midwifery profession. ACM upholds the right of women to be treated with dignity and respect through the reproductive life course in alignment with the Respectful maternity charter: the universal rights of childbearing women and the Australian National Strategy: Woman-Centred Care<sup>1,2</sup>.

The Australian College of Midwives (ACM) is currently developing a full position statement on respectful maternity care. In the interim, ACM issues an urgent call to all services and health practitioners to ensure that no woman experiences maternity care, which is disrespectful, unsafe (emotionally, physically, spiritually, culturally), coercive, or abusive<sup>3,4</sup>. We also acknowledge that health professionals do not go to work with the intention of causing harm. ACM is committed to working with consumers, health services, Government, policymakers, and clinicians to address systemic and cultural barriers to respectful maternity care in Australia.

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*The Australian College of Midwives acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live.*

**END**

### References

1. White Ribbon Alliance. (2011). Respectful maternity charter: the universal rights of women and newborns. <https://whiteribbonalliance.org/resources/rmc-charter/>
2. COAG Health Council. (2019). Woman-centred care: Strategic directions for Australian maternity services. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. Retrieved from <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019/11/woman-centred-care-strategic-directions-for-australian-maternity-services.pdf>
3. Keedle, H., Keedle, W., & Dahlen, H. (2022). Dehumanized, Violated, and Powerless: An Australian Survey of Women's Experiences of Obstetric Violence in the Past 5 Years. *Violence Against Women*.
4. Bradfield, Z., & Wilson, A. (2020). Respectful Maternity Care: Giving birth (in)to a better world. *Global Health* Vol 22. No 4. Retrieved from <https://www.ogmagazine.org.au/22/22-4/respectful-maternity-care/>