



ANNUAL REPORT  
2020-2021

## Board of Directors



**Ms Joanne Gray**  
President



**Ms Zoe Bradfield**  
WA (Vice President)



**Ms Donna Garland**  
NSW (Midwife Director and  
Chair of ACM Council)



**Ms Angela Brown**  
SA (Midwife Director)



**Ms Sally Preston**  
QLD (Community Director)



**Ms Alison Teate**  
(Midwife Director)



**Mr Ian Wilson**  
VIC (Community Director)



**Ms Allison Cummins**  
NSW (Midwife Director)

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## President's Report



On behalf of the Board of the Australian College of Midwives I am pleased to present this Annual Report 2020-2021. I would like to thank the ACM Board of Directors and the ACM Council for their support over the last 12 months, in which nation-wide rolling lockdowns due to the global COVID-19 pandemic continued to provide challenges to us all.

Current board members are:

- Zoe Bradfield, WA (Vice President)
- Donna Garland, NSW (Midwife Director and Chair of ACM Council)
- Angela Brown, SA (Midwife Director)
- Sally Preston, QLD (Community Director)
- Alison Teate (Midwife Director)
- Ian Wilson, VIC (Community Director)
- Allison Cummins, NSW (Midwife Director)

Thank you in particular to Ian Wilson whose financial expertise and insight has been crucial over his years on the Board and especially during the last twelve months in his final year as a Community Director with ACM.

I would like also to thank ACM staff, whose hard work seeing ACM through this challenging year has ensured we are in the best possible position to face the next twelve months as we return to face to face events and more usual operations.

During the 2020-2021 financial year, as a direct result of the pandemic affecting our operations, ACM qualified for the Commonwealth Job Keeper program, which allowed head office staff to continue to support members, develop educational resources and opportunities and transition most events to an online format, without interruption. We have been delighted by the interest in these offerings and the level of virtual engagement participants have displayed.

Our focus during this difficult time has truly been on our members and delivering exceptional value. We are delighted to have grown membership during 2020-2021 and take this as feedback that we are more closely aligning what ACM offers with what members want. We appreciate the support of our members and recognise this has come at a time that has had it's individual personal and professional challenges.

2021 saw the resignation of Luke Williamson as CEO and the appointment of an Interim CEO in Caroline Lamb. We also appointed a Chief Executive Principal Midwifery Officer, Kellie Wilton who has already proved invaluable in leading our advocacy work and positioning ACM at the table with key health decision makers in government and other stakeholder groups.

In the coming year our focus will be on you, our members. We are seeking to continue to implement recommendations from the 2020 Structural Review with a particular focus on how we best support our branches, including promoting the opportunities for new branches. We are reviewing the benefits that members receive and will continue to focus on growing our membership and providing excellent professional development.

Whilst the previous 12 months have indeed been difficult for us all, I do wish to particularly acknowledge our wonderful midwives and indeed all health care workers who have provided the front-line response to the pandemic. Midwives have sought to continue to support women and their families to ensure that despite the challenges women can achieve the best possible experience. Your commitment to supporting women and your colleagues during these difficult times has been inspiring.

## CEO's Report



FY2021 demonstrated the resilience of your College despite the impact of COVID.

Many members value the opportunities the College provides to get together with friends and colleagues. Despite the challenges 13 events were held across the country. Even though we were fortunate to have sellout conferences in NSW and Queensland, unsurprisingly revenue from College programs and education was down significantly against budget. The silver lining to this cloud was the growing success of virtual events. They have demonstrated that even though we may not be able to get together in person, many members appreciate the opportunity to build and refresh their skills through webinars and other events, particularly if they can attend in their own time.

Happily, membership numbers held firm, buoyed by new members who buffered our a concerning loss of members who

have been with us for around 5 years. We recognised the importance of understanding the needs of this group of midwives so as to support them in their careers. In response we developed a well subscribed leadership course as a first step in delivering more relevant member services.

Programs, including BFHI assessments, were largely on hold due to COVID restrictions.

It was a year to keep costs under control. Employment expenses were managed through reduced hours and subsidised by Jobkeeper, while other operating costs were kept to a minimum. The Branches saw a similar pattern of modest income and significantly reduced expenditure.

Many members are attracted to the College in anticipation of opportunities for professional networking, through the Branches and elsewhere. This was reflected in our membership survey with professional networking and education having the highest scores on Members' wishlists. Not all Members are able to, or want to, attend Branch meetings. We need to recognise this and provide more opportunities for midwives to engage with their professional colleagues, both through Branch events and, for example via social media, whether it's for an educational event or just a get together.

It has been a tough year for ACM staff with most working from home, many home schooling, and numerous staff changes, including a new CEO. Nevertheless they have worked tirelessly in your interests and to promote midwifery. I thank them, your wonderful President, Joanne and the rest of the Board most sincerely for their ongoing commitment and support.

### Australian Capital Territory Branch

We are a branch focused on the needs of our members and the women they care for.

ACT Branch has begun an enhanced communication and engagement process with its members as we have been affected by the lack of social gatherings over the 18 months that COVID has been with us. This process has been created with energy of the new executive branch members Hanako Sayers as Secretary, Phoebe O'Carrigan as Education Officer and Jan Taylor as Treasurer, supported by Emma Gaudron and Malorie Hodge. We have developed a regular education flyer keeping our members up to speed with ACM work and providing them with professional development opportunities. We have also continued to alternate business and social meetings each month. We think this is a good fit for everyone.

The branch continues to support local members with advocacy work as we come out of COVID lockdown including advocating for less restrictive visitation requirements at our local maternity hospitals so women can have the support they need during their stay. We are also supporting Endorsed Private Practising Midwives with re-negotiation of collaborative and license agreements with Canberra Health Services. The local Birth Centres have also been affected by COVID and are used as the surge units when COVID positive or potential COVID positive women are admitted. This has impacted on the women booked to birth in these units and the midwives who work there.

### New South Wales Branch

At the end of an eventful year, the New South Wales Branch have a few things to celebrate! We have continued to meet monthly over Zoom which has given us a wonderful opportunity to regularly check in with each other. Our committee consists of midwives from the hospital (rural and metropolitan), midwifery students, managers, private practice midwives, consumers and university lecturers. At the end of May we were able to come together at our NSW State conference in Kingscliff and within two weeks of this, we were in the grip of the Delta Covid outbreak. The conference was a delightful breath of fresh air and a chance to meet new and old ACM friends. We also honoured the contributions of midwifery legends Nicky Leap, Pat Brodie and Sally Tracy, all of whom were present and involved as usual!

The NSW Branch is also very involved with the ACM National Archive Project which is developing a website and archiving all the midwifery 'relics' and books from around the country. Notably, Christine Catling, Rachele Meredith and Nicky Leap are working with a group of dedicated midwives and historians from around Australia to preserve our national midwifery history. The launch of this wonderful resource will take place in December 2021. We are looking forward to the state conference in 2022 which will be held in Orange and we're hoping to resume our "Have pinards, will travel" workshops in rural NSW.

### Northern Territory Branch

The Northern Territory membership is stable at between 110-115 members with some modest increases this year. It has been a challenging year, like everywhere else, although we have obviously not suffered the lockdowns and restrictions of other states due to low numbers of COVID-19 infections in the community. The midwifery workforce has been hard to keep at full capacity, with

outreach teams to remote communities fighting to ensure midwives were essential while many other allied health and child health nurses were redeployed to COVID-19 duties.

We have successfully managed to have two education forums, in Darwin and Alice Springs, and said good bye to our long serving NT Midwife, Sandy McElligot who retired after 40 years as a midwife and ACM member, 35 of which were in the NT. We successfully nominated her for ACM Life Membership so she can keep in touch with her midwifery profession and her midwifery sisters who will miss her dearly. Thanks Sandy for your continuous passion for both Aboriginal women and remote Australia.

### South Australia Branch

The SA Branch State Virtual Conference was held in Sept 2020 and was attended by over 50 members. The speakers were all very engaging and spoke on very topical issues. A number of SA members also presented at the two-day, virtual ACM National Conference in November 2020 including Branch Chair M. Cooper and Supporting Member L. McKellar.

In March 2021 the SA Branch developed its own Strategic Plan 2021-2023, consistent with the ACM Strategic Plan. A number of activities have been undertaken in order to meet our branch goals including providing a response to the SA Health *SA Rural Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Plan 2021*. There were considerable concerns with the plan regarding both the loss of identity of midwifery and midwifery practice being viewed and seen the same as nursing.

SA midwives and midwifery students from all contexts celebrated International Day of the Midwife at the Adelaide Pavilion on 5 May. Midwives in attendance went on the IDM walk around the South Parklands of Adelaide which was followed by a very successful dinner. More than 60 were in attendance and lots of ideas generated for future events and raising the profile of midwifery in SA.

The SA Branch reinstated and reinvigorated our Facebook page led by Vice Chairperson J. Wood and Internal Communications Officer T. Day. To complement this, social media expectations have been developed. We currently have more than 200 midwives subscribed and share regular updates about news and events.

### Tasmania Branch

The Tasmanian Branch continues to support midwifery students and new graduates. In December 2021 we provided sashes and 'goodie bags' at the USQ Midwifery Graduation Ceremony. We are supporting midwives through scholarships for professional development and awarded \$2000 in scholarships last financial year. We have provided a representative on a working group for the progress of Endorsed Midwives working within the Tasmanian Health Service, as well as hospital access for Privately Practising Midwives. The branch has responded to requests for information and advice from prospective midwifery students, a journalist, the Tas Department of Health, and the Chief Nurse and Midwife Office. The branch has engaged with ACM Nationally via Council meetings, email correspondence and phone calls. In February I provided feedback to a national discussion on gender neutral terms in maternity. It's been a quiet year for socialising (no surprise!) but we had a great International Day of the Midwife walk in Hobart, and two walks in Launceston. Statewide Zoom meetings are commencing again. We welcome all interested midwives and students- please join in and speak up about what's important to you!

### Western Australia Branch

The Western Australian Branch of the Australian College of Midwives has been fortunate to have been able to hold several face-to-face events during the last financial year, despite COVID19 interruptions. A dedicated team of midwives and a consumer representative that serve on the Branch Committee have worked tirelessly to hold events that boost morale amongst the midwives. January saw the departure of our fearless leader Louise Keyes, with Jodie Atkinson taking the position of Chair of the Branch.

Successful events held include two Quiz nights, the Graduate Forum, Birth Time screening and prize giving ceremonies for midwifery students from all universities in WA. The Branch Exec attended O-Week at the universities offering midwifery courses. International Day of the Midwife was celebrated with the traditional IDM walk at Kings Park and was followed by the Health in the Margins conference which we co-branded with Living Child.

The beginning of 2021 saw the Branch lobbying MPs, the Director General and Health Minister when structural changes occurred in the Chief Nurse and Midwife Office (CNMO) reducing the Principal Midwifery Advisor position. Midwifery representation in the CNMO is still an area of concern as is the availability of continuity of care models at all health services. Branch members have continued to advocate for midwifery students, midwives and women and to promote midwifery in Western Australia.

### Victoria Branch

ACM's Victorian Branch has been running an Optimising Fetal and Newborn Wellbeing event for five years now with over 100 midwives attending the one day seminar held in the Melbourne CBD. In February 2021 we ran this event online and were thrilled with the result; over 250 people registered from all over Australia and New Zealand and recordings of the event continued to sell for the two months after. We had zero technical problems, a killer program of speakers from a range of disciplines and locations, over eight hours of content (some said too much!), a lunchtime discussion about postnatal care and money raised for future midwifery development via our scholarship program.

This event helped us understand that online events and networking could work for us as a branch and could be a point of connection for so many of our members having a hard time in this pandemic.

After this we introduced a regular members "virtual drop-in" event on Zoom. These run for a couple of hours on a weeknight and we have had from 4 to 24 attendees to each one – no awkward silences, no particular agenda and lots of say about the challenges of clinical practice. It's a safe space for midwives to chat and to discuss all the things about being a midwife. Everyone from students to clinicians in private practice and in the public system to academics and professors attend. These are not likely to be replaced soon by an in-person version.

Our Facebook branch group continues to grow- we have almost 400 members now. It is a point for advertising ACM events, posting articles and media snippets. We can also make comments after our events and invite feedback. We are happy to know we have a new way to connect with members that might endure into "living with Covid" and beyond.

# Australian College of Midwives Ltd

ABN: 49 289 821 863

## A Company Limited by Guarantee

### Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

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