



**NEW SOUTH WALES NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION**  
**AUSTRALIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY FEDERATION NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH**



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# **POLICY ON MIDWIFERY AND MIDWIFERY PRACTICE**

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**Re-Endorsed by Annual Conference 2022**

**NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association**  
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# Policy on Midwifery and Midwifery Practice

## THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION RECOGNISES THAT MIDWIVES:

- Are responsible and accountable professionals who work in partnership with women and their families to give support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour and birth and the postnatal period. Midwives provide care for the newborn, undertake promotion of normal birth, preventative health care and the detection of complications in the mother and her baby.
- Practise within their scope of practice in diverse settings including the home, hospitals, clinics and community settings to meet the needs of women and their families.
- Practice within different models of care such as Team midwifery or midwifery-led continuity of care, case load midwifery, Midwifery Group Practice (MGP), and traditional care or shared care models of midwifery.<sup>1</sup>
- Collaborate with medical or other appropriate health professionals.
- Carry out emergency measures when necessary.
- Provide health counselling and health promotion for the mother, her family and the broader community.

## THE NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION ADOPTS THE POLICY THAT:

1. The International Confederation of Midwives Council definition of a midwife is endorsed.<sup>2</sup>

### International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) International Definition of the Midwife

A midwife is a person who has successfully completed a midwifery education programme that is based on the ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice and the framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education and is recognised in the country where it is located; who has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practice midwifery and use the title 'midwife'; and who demonstrates competency in the practice of midwifery.



### *Scope of Practice*

The midwife is recognised as a responsible and accountable professional who works in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife's own responsibility and to provide care for the newborn and the infant. This care includes preventative measures, the promotion of normal birth, the detection of complications in mother and child, the accessing of medical care or other appropriate assistance and the carrying out of emergency measures.

The midwife has an important task in health counselling and education, not only for the woman, but also within the family and the community. This work should involve antenatal education and preparation for parenthood and may extend to women's health, sexual or reproductive health and child care.

A midwife may practise in any setting including the home, community, hospitals, clinics or health units.

*Revised and adopted at Toronto Council meeting, 2017*

2. Midwives are registered by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and must meet the NMBA's Registration standards, including Code of conduct, Code of ethics, Midwife standards for practice and the decision making framework
3. Midwives should be familiar with and use the Australian College of Midwives' National Midwifery Guidelines for Consultation and Referral.
4. Midwifery care is only undertaken by midwives.
5. Midwives, after undertaking a risk assessment, may delegate aspects of care to a non-midwife. A midwife retains accountability for the decision to delegate and the person accepting the delegation is responsible for the care they provide.
6. Midwifery practice is based on woman-centred and evidence-based practice and involves, physical, mental, social, cultural and spiritual care as well as support the woman's family and friends as required.
7. Midwives should understand the importance of, and incorporate into all aspects of their practice, the principles of cultural safety and respect.
8. Midwifery courses leading to registration as a midwife are developed in conjunction with the professional and industrial bodies that represent midwifery.
9. Students may apply for registration as a midwife after successful completion of a NMBA approved program of study.



10. Students of midwifery must have access to high quality clinical education, supervised and assessed by midwives, that prepares them for safe and collaborative practice in all aspects of midwifery care.
11. Re-entry to practice, supervised practice and refresher programs should be readily available and meet the individual learning needs of the midwife returning to practice. These programs should be provided in a flexible manner and include an option for distance education and locally arranged clinical placements.
12. Flexible industrial agreements should be available for midwives to accommodate different models of midwifery care including continuity of midwifery carer models.
13. Midwives are able to access professional indemnity insurance.
14. Clients of privately practising midwives should receive reimbursement for midwifery care from Medicare as well as from private health insurance companies.
15. Privately practising midwives should have access to workable arrangements to facilitate collaborative practice with hospitals and NSW Health Local Health Districts.
16. International Day of the Midwife on 5 May each year is celebrated.
17. Consumer representatives protect the interests of consumers, service users and potential services users.

## REFERENCES

1. Midwifery Continuity of Carer Model Tool-Kit. NSW Ministry of Health (2012)
2. International Confederation of Midwives, 2017 *International Definition of the Midwife*, viewed 22 January 2022 [https://www.internationalmidwives.org/assets/files/definitions-files/2018/06/eng-definition\\_of\\_the\\_midwife-2017.pdf](https://www.internationalmidwives.org/assets/files/definitions-files/2018/06/eng-definition_of_the_midwife-2017.pdf)
3. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2018), Midwife standards for practice. Melbourne NMBA. Available at: <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards/Midwife-standards-forpractice.aspx>
4. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (2021) *Professional codes and guidelines*. Available at: <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements.aspx>