

## **Homebirth Position Statement**

Women choose to birth in a range of settings, including at home. Midwives provide midwifery care for women, their babies, and their families in all settings, including the home, consistent with the ICM definition of a midwife. Midwives provide homebirth care in private and public models.

## **Philosophy**

Midwifery care is woman-centred, and occurs in a relationship which is a partnership between a woman and a midwife. Women have a right to decide where they wish to birth their baby. Women have a right to receive the best possible care given the choices that they make. Informed decision-making, informed consent, and right of refusal are accepted legal concepts. They apply to all women, including those birthing at home. The woman has the right to make informed decisions, including consent or refusal of any aspect of her care. Women need access to information, including evidenced based clinical information and information about midwives registration and endorsement status to support decision making around pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period.

## **Professional and legal guidance**

Midwives work within legal and professional frameworks, which guide their practice. The current framework includes the Quality and Safety Framework (NMBA 2010). Midwives providing birth care within the home in private practice do not currently have access to Professional Indemnity Insurance. They are required under National Regulation Law 2010, Section 284 exemption, to comply with the Quality and Safety Framework, reporting of data under state and territory laws and must have full informed consent to their clients of their insurance status.

## **Supportive systems**

Midwifery care is provided within a maternity care system, which must, in whole and in each part, respect midwives' professional role in the health care system, including for birth care at home. Supportive systems recognise and ensure women's rights to informed choice. All agencies responsible for Australia's maternity care system must ensure that women choosing to birth at home have access to midwifery homebirth services. The safety and quality of midwifery services is dependent on processes and professional relationships, which can ensure seamless access to consultation, referral, or transfer from home to hospital or other necessary services. Equity of access and funding for homebirth services are a component of supportive maternity health care systems.