



**ACT**  
Government

# SUPPORTING CANBERRA MUMS AND MUMS-TO-BE ENGAGEMENT REPORT

CANBERRA HEALTH SERVICES

SEPTEMBER 2019

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We heard from new parents that it's not always clear what to do when you first find out you're having a baby.

Centenary Hospital for Women and Children and Calvary Public Hospital worked together to develop a proposed system which creates a streamlined single entry point for public maternity services. We want to ensure that pregnant women receive the right care at the right place, as close to home as possible.

We consulted with new mums, mums-to-be, health practitioners and community organisations about how to make it easier for women to learn about and access our public maternity services. The feedback from these individuals and groups helped to shape the proposed system.

To better understand whether the proposed system would be effective, we conducted a YourSay survey which ran from 25 March to 6 May 2019.

Overall, the response was very positive:

- 93% of people said a single phone number would make it easier for them to access maternity services.
- 86% said it would be very important to meet a midwife early in their pregnancy to talk about pregnancy and birthing options through the public system.

The feedback was used to refine the new system which will launch on 30 September 2019. Women will call one number to access Canberra's public maternity services and meet with a midwife close to home to talk about their pregnancy care and birthing options, and complete a health and wellbeing assessment.

## WHY WE ENGAGED

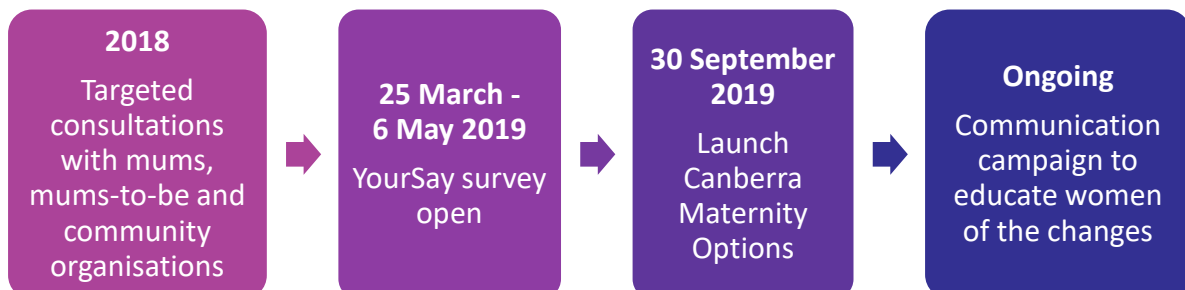
In 2016, the Women’s Centre for Health Matters conducted a consultation project to explore women’s experiences of accessing maternal care in the ACT. *The Women and Maternal Care in the ACT Consultation Report*, looked at experiences accessing and using services, and explored where there might be opportunities to improve.

The report identified that there was room for improvement. It was clear that what is best care for one woman is not for the other. It also found that women wanted consistency in the information they received to help them make an informed decision about care they receive.

Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital developed immediate and long term operational strategies to ensure that women are receiving the right care at the right place, as close to home as possible.

The changes that were proposed within the YourSay survey look to make it easier for women to access Canberra’s public maternity services and ensure that women are having an informed choice about their local pregnancy and birthing options in Canberra.

## TIMELINE OF ENGAGEMENT



## WHAT WE ASKED

We wanted to know whether the following proposed changes would make it easier to learn about and access Canberra's public maternity services.

We proposed that women will:

- call one phone number to arrange their first appointment with a midwife
- meet a midwife early to talk about public pregnancy and birthing options available in Canberra and their personal preferences and health care needs
- receive local support before, during and after their pregnancy.

We also asked for their feedback on what else would make it easier for them to learn about and access public maternity services.

## WHO WE ENGAGED WITH

In 2018, Women's Centre for Health Matters conducted targeted consultations with mums, mums-to-be and community organisations. Centenary Hospital for Women and Children also consulted with health practitioners and key stakeholders.

In 2019, we invited the community to share their views via a survey at [www.yoursay.act.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au).

We used the following methods to encourage the community to have their say:

- Sent an email to more than 6,000 YourSay subscribers notifying them about the survey opening
- Boosted and targeted social media posts which had a reach of over 28,000
- Featured on ACT Government social media pages
- Digital signage across Canberra Health Services facilities
- Web content including web banner on homepage of [health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)
- Fax to GPs and article in the Capital Health Network digital newsletter
- Intranet article and hardcopy memo to staff at Canberra Health Services and provided to Calvary Public Hospital
- Media coverage on RiotACT.

## WHO WE HEARD FROM AND HOW

### 2018-2019 - Targeted consultations

Canberra Health Services engaged Women's Centre for Health Matters to hold targeted consultations on an early concept that looked to make it easier to access Canberra's public maternity services.

Women's Centre for Health Matters held four separate consultations to seek views about the proposed change.

The first consultation was held with eight attendees from community service providers. The three subsequent consultations were held with ACT women who had accessed ACT public maternity services in the past 12 months, who were pregnant or were planning on having a child.

Overall, the women were very positive about the early concept and thought it was a great idea to connect women at an early stage with information and midwives.

Separately, the Canberra Health Services project team have discussed the early concept with executives at both Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, Southern NSW Area Health Service, Australian Medical Association, Australian College of Midwives, General Practitioners (GPs), local obstetricians and women in CALD and young mums clinics. Further communication regarding the new system has been provided to the ACT Health Multicultural Health Reference group and Winnunga Nimmityjah Health Service.

Feedback from these individuals and groups helped to shape the proposed changes which we opened for broader community feedback on YourSay.

### 2019 - YourSay consultation

On 25 March 2019, we opened the *Supporting Canberra mums and mums-to-be* survey on [www.yoursay.act.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.act.gov.au).

We invited the broader community to have their say over a six week period.

We had 735 respondents in total, 686 of these were survey responses and 49 were short comments.

The majority of respondents have had a child before, with 14% of respondents saying they have not had a child yet.

## WHAT WE HEARD

### SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE ENGAGEMENT

#### Key insights

##### **Single phone number**

93% of you said having a single phone number would make it easier to access public maternity services.

Although we heard that the single entry point (phone number) would only be helpful if phone calls were answered and voice messages returned.

##### **Meeting a midwife early in their pregnancy**

86% of you said it was very important to meet a midwife early in pregnancy to talk about pregnancy and birthing options.

11% said it was somewhat important and 2% said it was not important.

##### **More service information, preferably online**

We heard you want clearer information about the system and what birthing and care options are available. Many of you suggested a website with consolidated information would be ideal.

##### **GPs**

We heard that you want GPs to be well informed about the new system and what birthing and care options are available.

## THE RESULTS OF THE ENGAGEMENT IN DETAIL

Overall, the response to the *Supporting Canberra mums and mums-to-be* YourSay consultation was very positive.

We received 735 responses in total, 686 of these were survey responses and 49 were short comments.

In response to the proposed changes, 93% of people said a single phone number would make it easier for them to access maternity services. 86% of people also said it would be very important to meet a midwife early in their pregnancy to talk about pregnancy and birthing options through the public system, while 11% said it was somewhat important.

We asked how else would you like to learn about pregnancy and birthing options available in Canberra through the public system.

The most common feedback we received was that women wanted clearer information about the system and what birthing and care options are available. Many of them suggested a website with consolidated information would be ideal. Women also said that they wanted

their GPs to be well informed about the new system and what birthing and care options are available.

We asked how women would like to hear about the new system when it's being launched, 81% said website, 71% said early pregnancy education session, 68% said GP, 28% said social media and 16% said friend or family member.

A detailed breakdown of the survey results is available at Appendix C.

## NEXT STEPS

On 30 September, we are introducing a new system to make it easier for women to learn about and access Canberra's public maternity system.

Under the new system women will:

- call 5124 9977 to arrange their first appointment with a midwife
- book an appointment with a GP for early pregnancy care
- meet a midwife at a community centre close to home to talk about public pregnancy and birthing options, complete a health and wellbeing assessment and discuss the best options for them
- receive ongoing local support before, during and after pregnancy.

We will educate the community of the changes through improved web information, early pregnancy information sessions, social media, an online toolkit for GPs and more.

For more information about the new system, visit [www.health.act.gov.au/maternity](http://www.health.act.gov.au/maternity)



# APPENDICES

## A ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

**Which maternity services have you or your partner used?**

- I haven't had children
- Centenary Hospital for Women and Children in Garran (or Canberra Hospital, prior to 2013)
- Birth Centre at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children in Garran (or Canberra Hospital, prior to 2013)
- Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce
- Birth Centre at Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce
- I used the private maternity system in Canberra
- I did not have my child in Canberra

**We are proposing that expectant parents will use a single phone number to book the first appointment with a midwife. Would a single phone number make it easier for you to access maternity services?**

- Yes
- No

**What else would make it easier to access public maternity services?**

You have 500 characters left.

**How important will it be to meet a midwife early in your pregnancy to talk about pregnancy and birthing options through the public system?**

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

## SUPPORTING CANBERRA MUMS AND MUMS-TO-BE

### How else would you like to learn about pregnancy and birthing options available in Canberra through the public system?

You can tick more than one box

- Early pregnancy education session
- GP
- Website
- Social media
- Friend or family member
- Other (please specify)

### Prior to completing this survey, what public maternity options were you aware of?

- Midwifery led care (continuity program)
- Midwives Clinic
- Obstetric led care for women with risk factors
- GP Shared Care
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
- Homebirth

## B ONLINE SHORT COMMENT

We wanted to hear your thoughts on the new way to learn about and access public maternity services in Canberra.

Before commenting we asked you to [watch the video](#) of midwife Jo explaining the proposed changes, or [view the transcript](#).

**Share your thoughts** Required

You have 800 characters left.

## C ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

### Which maternity services have you or your partner used?

Answer choices	Percent
I haven't had children	14.14%
Centenary Hospital for Women and Children in Garran (or Canberra Hospital, prior to 2013)	39.21%
Birth Centre at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children in Garran (or Canberra Hospital, prior to 2013)	28.13%
Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce	14.87%
Birth Centre at Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce	8.60%
I used the private maternity system in Canberra	11.81%
I did not have my child in Canberra	6.27%

### We are proposing that expectant parents will use a single phone number to book the first appointment with a midwife. Would a single phone number make it easier for you to access maternity services?

Answer choices	Percent
Yes	93.28%
No	6.72%

### What else would make it easier to access public maternity services?

Example comments:

*"More information online so that I can do my own research in my own time, prior to speaking to an expert."*

*"Keep GPs as a central part of the system. Keep GPs informed of any changes and communicate with them."*

*"More information available online about different services, what they offer, how to access them, normal time frames for first appointment."*

*"More information on an easy to find website – its all over the place at the moment and there a (sic) so many options it's hard to decipher them all."*

*"Clear information about all services in one place. Maybe a comparison chart? It is hard to know which is best suited to you or how to compare the different models of care within the public system."*

*"GP's sometimes seem ill informed of the processes required to access public maternity services. Referrals may be done but then required blood work isn't etc."*

*"A single phone number is easy, but only if it's answered. One of the most anxious times of my pregnancy has been initiating contact..."*

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*“More information available online about different services, what they offer, how to access them, normal time frames for first appointment.”*

*“The plan looks like it will really help and fill some gaps. Meeting a midwife early and locally sounds great...”*

*“More info available about options all in one place. It was very confusing to find out exactly what was available.”*

*“One single line is a great idea, however, it would be great to integrate alongside an alternative option – online booking system with clear step by step instruction...”*

*“Easy ways to find out how the different maternity services work so I can think about what best suits me before I make the call to book in.”*

**How important will it be to meet a midwife early in your pregnancy to talk about pregnancy and birthing options through the public system?**

Answer choices	Percent
Very important	86.15%
Somewhat important	11.81%
Not important	2.04%

**How else would you like to learn about pregnancy and birthing options available in Canberra through the public system?**

Answer choices	Percent
Early pregnancy education session	71.03%
GP	68.38%
Website	81.91%
Social media	28.09%
Friend or family member	16.18%
Other	3.38%

**Prior to completing this survey, what public maternity options were you aware of?**

Answer choices	Percent
Midwifery led care (continuity program)	83.33%
Midwives Clinic	53.94%
Obstetric led care for women with risk factors	57.58%
GP Shared Care	73.94%
Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services	25.15%
Homebirth	48.64%



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