



Introducing Midwifery Group Practice (formerly Community Midwife Program - CMP)

CMP throughout the years...

The Community Midwife Program (or CMP as it has commonly been known throughout the years) was initially trialled at the Wangaratta District Base Hospital in 1995 in response to a Commonwealth Birthing Services Review into improving access to maternity services for all women. The model was one of the first of its kind in Victoria.

Due to its success, the hospital with support from Obstetricians Colin Pearse and Leo Fogarty, continued the program outside of the pilot and CMP became a permanent option for maternity care for local women 20 years ago – in November of 1998. The program initially consisted of 4 midwives – Helen Haines, Janine Holland, Diana Marshall and Janet Baker.

In its first years, CMP had the capacity to care for 80 women per year. The demand soon increased, and along with that came a 5th midwife and the added ability to provide care to more women and families. Since its inception, the midwives of CMP have attended to over 3,000 births, including assisting women returning to CMP with their second, third or even seventh child! With five midwives providing a 24/7 on call service for labour, birth and pregnancy advice or concerns, as well as providing routine antenatal care and home based postnatal care for up to 6 weeks, the program currently has the ability to care for 140 women per year.

CMP's emphasis is on providing women-centred, individualised and evidence based care to those with low risk pregnancies, and providing supported care for those women who have a higher risk profile in conjunction with the Obstetric team. The ability to provide antenatal and postnatal care with continuity and flexibility in a child friendly setting is certainly one of the program's biggest strengths. To ensure the best and safest outcomes, as well as client satisfaction, the midwives work closely with a multi disciplinary team including obstetricians, perinatal mental health nurses, diabetic educators, social workers and physiotherapists.

Today, the success of CMP continues, and after 20 years, the program strives to continue evolving and remaining contemporary. This year has been an exciting time with planning the 20 year celebration, undertaking an independent review of the program and having the honour of winning the Health category at the Wangaratta Business Awards. We want to continue to provide the highest level of care to our community and to meet the demand that is so obviously there. In 2019, 20 more women will gain access to continuity of midwifery care, increasing the program's capacity to care for up to 160 women per year. With the support of Northeast Health Wangaratta's (NHW) CEO Margaret Bennett and the Executive team and the entire maternity services team, the future is looking bright.

The current team of midwives would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of those midwives who established the strength of this model – in particular Janet Baker and Diana Marshall, both of whom have only very recently stepped out of the program enabling other midwives to move into the model.

Importantly, the families of our community who have and continue to support CMP are to be celebrated – without whom CMP wouldn't exist. We love seeing you and your growing families and we thank you for giving us the opportunity to be a part of that.

In conjunction with the 20 year milestone and the recent review of the service and forward direction, we now formally announce a name change for the service, from Community Midwife Program to Midwifery Group Practice – this name will take the service into the future in line with like services across the nation. We look forward to continuing the success of CMP and to moving forward with MGP.



The 4 original CMP midwives L-R: Helen Haines, Janine Holland, Diana Marshall and Janet Baker

The CMP midwives past and present along with Obstetricians Leo Fogarty and Judith Krones, NHW CEO, Margaret Bennett, pictured with Sam Shanley, one of the first babies born through the service in 1998 and one of our most recent arrivals Milla with mum Olivia Szeligiewicz.



Pictured L-R: Kate Stirling, Leo Fogarty, Alison Doyle, Karen Oddie, Judith Krones with baby Olivia Wilson, Maree Dawson, Janine Holland, Sue McAllister, Helen Haines, Karli Vincent, Margaret Bennett, Diana Marshall, Sally Webb, Kristal Byrne, Janet Baker, Sam Shanley, Olivia Szeligiewicz and baby Milla.



Makeup artist Kacey Tanner with Maddison Watts.



Annelisa Corboy pictured with her children William (12), Dominic (10), Edward (8), Bridget (6), Nicolas (4) and Isabel (2), midwife Kate Stirling (far left) and Karen Oddie, Maternity Unit Manager (centre). All 7 of the Corboy children were born through CMP. (Xavier (13) absent from photo).



NHW CEO Margaret Bennett with baby Olivia and mum Hanna Wilson.



Drew Dickson and daughter Tayah.

“As a ‘bloke’ I cannot praise the CMP enough. The midwives are fantastic and understanding and it's a shame that only a select handful of mothers have this as an option. Midwifery is a wonderful and fulfilling vocation and, from what I can see, the CMP allows the midwives to do their job with the freedom that is required.”

“A friend told me how good it was and having my first baby it was nice to have a trained midwife to talk me through each step and mostly to have the same midwife for all my appointments.”

From Midwife, Janet ...
I enjoy the antenatal consultations with the women and following them to the next visit. It gives me time to help prepare them with one-to-one education for labour, going home early and giving them reassurance that they are capable of birth and that we will give continued care in the home. I very much enjoy the visit at six weeks for a wellness check when we see how they have adjusted to their new role as a mother and a chance to view the older baby, who has usually reached smiling stage.”



Celebration of the Community Midwife Program

A celebration of 20 years of the Community Midwife Program (CMP) was held recently at Northeast Health Wangaratta, with many families and past and present staff connected with the service over the years returning to enjoy the festivities.

Children of all ages delighted in the jumping castle and face painting, whilst the mums and dads enjoyed the social connection with other mums and dads and returning to share with the midwives just how much their young brood has grown.

Former midwives from the program returned to reminisce, some travelling distance to be there.

Special guest RCoW Councillor Ashlee Fitzpatrick thanked Northeast Health Wangaratta for providing such a dedicated service to our local community and to the broader north east Victoria community over 20 years. “Our community is indeed fortunate to have such a highly experienced and skilled team in the provision of obstetric and maternity services.”

We were delighted to have one of our first babies born through the service, 20 year old Sam Shanley attend the event with his dad Paul. Sam is pictured along with one of the service's newest arrivals, baby Milla and mum Olivia Szeligiewicz.

Also taking part in the celebration was the Corboy family, who have extraordinarily attended CMP for all 7 of their children. Other families with 1, 2, 3 and 4 children also enjoyed the day.

It was a joyous and happy occasion!



RCoW Cr Ashlee Fitzpatrick with Olivia Szeligiewicz, her baby Milla and Sam Shanley.