



Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia,

Re: NMBA Code of Conduct

The ACT Branch of the Australian College of Midwives (ACM) would like to draw your attention to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) revision of the Code of Conduct for Midwives which is out for public consultation. We would like to urgently raise our concerns to ensure the Codes continue to act to protect the Public.

- **Person Centred Care**

The Code refers to Person Centred Care as opposed to Woman Centred Care. Midwife means 'with woman' and this meaning shapes midwifery's philosophy, work and professional relationships. Midwifery is a woman-centred primary health care discipline founded on relationships between women and midwives. Woman centred care is a focus of the NMBA Competency Standards for the Midwife (NMBA 2006) which have been used in education and regulation for more than a decade. The concept is central to the ANMAC Midwife Accreditation Standards (ANMAC 2014) which directs the education of all midwives in the country. Woman centred care is also a global concept that is promoted and supported by the International Confederation of Midwives and in the Lancet Series of Midwifery (Renfrew, McFadden et al. 2014). Person centred care does not describe the central concept of midwifery.

- **Combined Nursing and Midwifery Code**

We do not support a combined nursing and midwifery code. Codes should reflect the unique nature of each profession. In 2010, legislation recognised midwifery as a distinct, separate profession to nursing, and a separate register for midwives has been instituted since. In 2015, the Independent Review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professions made Recommendation 27. This was that the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009* be amended to reflect and recognise that nursing and midwifery are two professions regulated by one National Board. This was in light of Australian midwifery having its own internationally recognised definition, scope of practice, national code of ethics and professional conduct; decision-making framework; continuing professional development and standards review; as well as education and practice standards (ANMC 2006, ANMAC 2013). The two professions have distinct and different skills and practices. Regulators have a responsibility to properly inform the public and employers to ensure protection of the public.

- **Working in Partnership**

We support working in Partnership rather than a Professional Relationship. The ACM believes that the work midwives do is a partnership and this is in line with our philosophy of midwifery care. This Partnership Model has been part of midwifery since 1995 when it was articulated by our colleagues in New Zealand (Guilliland and Pairman 1995, Leap and Pairman 2006). Similarly, the content under 'Boundaries' in the proposed Code is not on par with the Continuity of Care Model where midwives demonstrate their professional judgement within the Partnership Model.

We thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

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On behalf of the ACT Branch of the Australian College of Midwives

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