ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR BIRTHING ON COUNTRY

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The Australian College of Midwives is committed to Birthing on Country, an Indigenous maternity services program calling for reform to maternity care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and achieving better health outcomes for mothers and babies.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) will provide an additional $1.1 million grant to ACM partner, the University of Queensland, to facilitate the implementation of three Birthing on Country demonstration sites (Brisbane, Shoalhaven and a third site to be determined) before an intended nationwide rollout.

ACM Birthing on Country Project Manager Cherisse Buzzacott said Indigenous communities in the Shoalhaven are excited by the coming change in maternity services.

“Through yarning circles, Aboriginal Community members are identifying values around what Birthing on Country should look like in their communities. This includes birthing in their own traditional country in a culturally safe space and building trusting relationships with health care providers. Access to support services before and after they give birth is key,” said Buzzacott.

“With the addition of more funding, we are able to provide more support and establish culturally safe and holistic care centres. We have the means to build the Aboriginal workforce and provide a cultural education package to implement into all health services who care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The additional $1.1 million will fund better maternity care for Aboriginal women, babies and families and will see improvements on outcomes for all of the Community,” Buzzacott continued.

ACM CEO Ann Kinnear said “It is vital for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mothers to feel encouraged and supported to incorporate cultural aspects into their maternity care, whether they are in urban or remote settings. Their maternity care should address cultural, spiritual and emotional needs as well as physical needs.”

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Additional information: The Australian College of Midwives and Birthing on Country
The Australian College of Midwives (ACM) is the peak professional body for midwives in Australia who are registered with, and regulated by, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). The ACM’s position is that women be attended during pregnancy, birth and postnatally by a midwife who is registered with the NMBA.

Launched in November 2016, The Birthing on Country program is a partnership between the Australian College of Midwives, the University of Queensland, the University of Sydney, the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane, the Waminda South Coast Women’s Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation, the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives, and the Rhodanthe Lipsett Indigenous Midwifery Charitable Fund. The project is a partnership between ACM, CATSINaM.