

Answers to questions taken on notice - NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

1. Do you have any sense of how many births take place not in or around a medical environment?

Unfortunately, this question is not answerable with NSWNMA data. Rather, it would be reflected in NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages data and LHD data.

2. The Chair was asking about mums who don't have a baby in a hospital, but my question is more about what percentage of mums don't engage with the process, or attend the first one, go "Oh, that's not for me", for whatever reason. Do you have that information on what the drop-off is?

Again, the answer to this question falls outside the area of expertise of the NSWNMA. LHD data would likely provide insight.

Despite this, the NSWNMA acknowledges the stark underrepresentation of First Nations People within the current nursing and midwifery workforce. This lack of representation poses barriers to service access and results in a significant deficit in culturally appropriate care, leading to health disparities for Indigenous families. Specifically, Indigenous families are often less likely to engage with mainstream maternity and child health services, which may not align with traditional practices. Furthermore, disparities in outcomes are exacerbated in remote areas, where Indigenous women disproportionately give birth¹.

Aligning with the insights of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework, the NSWNMA acknowledges the preference of Indigenous Australians to receive care from Indigenous health professionals. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the most effective models of care are those that foster continuity and trust. Services that involve a known Indigenous care provider throughout the antenatal, intrapartum, postpartum and early childhood periods are highly valued by First Nations families. Ultimately, care provided by an Indigenous nurse and/or midwife is particularly esteemed and reduces the potential service "drop-off"².

¹ Sivertsen, N; Deverix, J; Gregoric, C; et al. (2022). "A Call for Culture-Centred Care: Exploring Health Workers' Perspectives of Positive Care Experiences and Culturally Responsive Care Provision to Aboriginal Women and Their Infants in Mainstream Health in South Australia." *Health research policy and systems*, 20(1): 132–132.

² Lai, G; Taylor, E; Haigh, M; et al. (2018). "Factors Affecting the Retention of Indigenous Australians in the Health Workforce: A Systematic Review." *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 15(5).