

**Submission
No 57**

SUPPORT FOR NEW PARENTS AND BABIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Parliament of New South Wales
Parliament House,
6 Macquarie Street,
Sydney, NSW 2000.

Via email communityservices@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Committee Chair,

Re: Inquiry into new support for new parents and babies

The Centre of Perinatal Excellence welcomes the NSW Inquiry into support for new parents and babies, particularly in light of the Commonwealth's withdrawal of funding under the National Perinatal Depression Initiative and the urgent need for an integrated, innovative and sustainable approach to perinatal mental health in Australia.

In response to the need for national leadership and momentum, the [Centre of Perinatal Excellence](#) (COPE) is a national not-for-profit organisation established in Victoria in July 2013, which is recognised as Australia's peak body in perinatal mental health.

Over the past four years, COPE has worked with our [Company membership](#) including peak bodies in maternity, postnatal and mental health to develop a holistic and integrated solution to support the efficient implementation of perinatal mental health best practice.

This has led to the establishment of an innovative, inclusive and sustainable solution that includes:

1. **New Perinatal Mental Health Guideline:** As the peak body, COPE has developed Australia's National Clinical Practice Guideline for Perinatal Mental Health. Released in October 2017 following approval by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Guideline serves to inform and guide best practice in the detection, management and treatment of perinatal mental health in Australia. This [Guideline](#) should underpin all activity surrounding perinatal mental health.

In addition to the Guideline itself, COPE has developed free, a free, accredited [online training program](#) for health professionals, together with a suite of information resources for [health professionals](#) and consumers/carers in the [antenatal](#) and [postnatal](#) periods. Together, the training and resources will serve to equip health professionals with the skills to implement best practice in accordance with the 2017 Guideline, and their active promotion will serve to up skill health professionals across the State.

2. **New Digital Screening Technology:** The development of an innovative [digital screening platform](#) (iCOPE) facilitates screening across a broad range of health settings (maternity, postnatal, primary and specialist care settings). This technology includes the integration of instant clinical and patient reports to guide consumers and health professionals to best practice information and treatments.

The automated collection of data in real time informs screening rates and outcomes. Its successful pilot application in antenatal and postnatal settings demonstrates iCOPE's ability to increase screening rates and accuracy and make screening and reporting available for clients in 14 languages, whilst enabling the evaluation of client and service needs within and across services and jurisdictions. More information can be found [here](#).

3. **Innovative and sustainable approaches to health education and promotion:** The NPDI had previously funded the production and dissemination of hard copy booklets (currently only available in English) to inform and educate consumers about emotional and mental health. Such an approach is expensive and unsustainable. In response to the need to develop a more targeted, engaging and cost-effective solution, COPE has developed the [Ready to COPE Guide](#).

Ready to COPE is an easy-to-read, cost-effective e-newsletter that engages with women to provide ongoing information to expectant and new mothers across the 21-month period from conception to the end of the first year in early parenthood. This approach provides targeted, relevant information about emotional and mental health at each stage across the perinatal period, with direction to factsheets and further information and guidance via the COPE website. The Commonwealth has committed the translation of this resource into ten languages as well as its adaption for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. A dedicated focus on dissemination throughout NSW would be a highly cost-effective approach to education, health promotion and prevention for expectant and new mothers across the State.

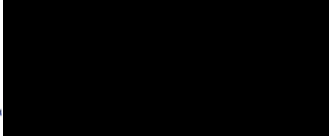
4. **E-Mapping of perinatal mental health services** – One of the greatest challenges is the identification of timely, relevant referral pathways for those at risk of or experiencing perinatal mental health problems. In response to this clear and unmet need the [e-COPE Directory](#) will be developed to facilitate the identification of referral pathways for health professionals and consumers by postcode to support access to evidence-based treatments in the community. Support from the Commonwealth has been provided to develop national accreditation standards and infrastructure, and further support from NSW would support its population of services to facilitate timely and quality identification of services across NSW.

The development and integration of each of these solutions directly increases the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the delivery of best practice solutions. With an ever-expanding multicultural population across the State, these new approaches are inclusive of those from CALD backgrounds, and can also be tailored to meet the needs of those in rural and remote New South Wales.

Together, these elements provide New South Wales with the potential for an integrated, innovative and holistic system that identifies, supports and provides evidence-based treatments for women in the perinatal period.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further with the Committee, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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