ACT Health Homebirth Trial

**Background, implementation and cost**

The cost of the three year trial will be met within existing ACT Health resources, utilising midwives currently employed at the Canberra Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. These midwives will deliver the services throughout the trial.

The homebirth trial is publicly funded and as such, if you have a valid Medicare or Asylum Seeker card, your homebirth will be free of charge.

**Why is ACT Health trialing homebirths in the ACT?**

The trial has been developed in response to community interest in providing more public birthing choices for women in the ACT.

**Who is eligible for the trial?**

Women who meet the requirements set out in the self assessment criteria.

The trial is also only available to eligible ACT women who reside within the trial catchment area, within 15 minutes travelling time from the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (30 minutes round trip).

**Why is the trial not available for all ACT women and women in NSW who live within the catchment area?**

For the purpose of the homebirth trial, women need to reside within 15 minutes travelling time of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, to ensure the highest level of safety for participating women and their babies (30 minutes round trip).

NSW women are not eligible at this time because they are not within the required travelling time from the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. Priority will also be given to ACT residents.

**How much will the trial cost?**

The cost of the trial will be met within existing ACT Health resources. Midwives currently employed at ACT Health will deliver the services throughout the trial.

**Do I have to pay to use the service?**

The homebirth trial is publicly funded so your homebirth will be free of charge if you have a valid Medicare or Asylum Seeker card.

**How many births will be funded through the trial?**

It is expected the trial will provide one to two homebirths each month from February 2017.

**How will the trial be evaluated?**

The trial will be evaluated by ACT Health staff and stakeholders, including those making use of the services, on an ongoing basis. An external and independent evaluation will also occur at the completion of the trial.
If the trial is deemed successful, will it become available to women on the northside of Canberra, or remain solely available to those in the catchment area as identified in the trial?

This will be dependent on the outcomes of the internal and external evaluations, but there is potential for the trial to become an ongoing maternity service.

Do other states across Australia have the option of publicly funded homebirth?

Publicly funded homebirth is currently available in the following Australian jurisdictions:

- Victoria
- South Australia
- Western Australia, and
- Northern Territory.

How many planned homebirths are there in Australia?

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reports the number of homebirths every year in Australia, with planned homebirths accounting for approximately 0.3 per cent of all births.

Has homebirth previously been available in the ACT?

Homebirth in the ACT has previously only been available in the private sector.