MATERNAL AND CHILD EXPERTISE

ABOUT THE WHO CC UTS

The World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery & Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CC UTS) was designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre in January 2008 and awarded re-designation in 2012 and 2016, 2020 until 2024.

To date, the WHO CC UTS has contributed to over 60 projects being undertaken in 25 countries. WHO CC UTS personnel invest in building trusting longstanding collaborative relationships with colleagues and partners across the Western Pacific region. Our Ongoing work in these countries through these relationships is essential to ensuring sustainability is integrated into every project, regardless of how big or small.

Placed within the Faculty of Health at UTS, the Centre collaborates with experts across the Faculty to deliver on the WHO Terms of Reference as follows:

- Facilitating networking, collaboration and communication among Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers in the South Pacific as well as for the Global Network of WHO CCs for Nursing and Midwifery Development.
- Capacity building to strengthen health systems and human resources for health to respond to priority health challenges.
- Contributing to strengthening health workforce regulation and education toward improving quality of services.
- Strengthening the capacity of the maternal health workforce through improved midwifery education and practice to improve maternal and child health services.

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR MIDWIFERY, CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH (CMCFH) AT UTS

The Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health at UTS (CMCFH) is dedicated to improving the health of childbearing women, children, young people and families through leadership in midwifery, child and family health research, education, practice development and consultancy.

The CMCFH conducts research that strengthens and supports the health of families, improves policy and systems particularly in vulnerable populations, develops workforce capacity and practice and collaborates to improve outcomes for Australian Indigenous women, children and adolescents.

The CMCFH pursues excellence in globally relevant research, inspired teaching and learning, and utilises leading interdisciplinary approaches to health development and best practice.

MATERNAL AND CHILD EXPERTISE (MCE) at UTS

The WHO CC UTS’ collaboration with the CMCFH has enabled the successful completion of a range of maternal and child health projects. The Centres have national, regional and global maternal and child expertise collaborating on projects across 17 Pacific countries with local, regional and global partners such as:

The Australian Government; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); Asian Development Bank; World Bank; Asia Pacific Emergency and Disaster Nursing Network; South Pacific Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers’ Alliance; Global Network of WHO CCs for Nursing and Midwifery; Pacific Human Resources for Health Alliance; Australian Council for International Development; Pacific Community; WHO Western Pacific Regional Office and South East Asia Regional Office; WHO Headquarters; NZ MFAT; Japan International Cooperation Agency; JTAI; Ministries of Health and WHO CCs.

Drawing on the expertise of leading academics within UTS, in particular, the Faculty Health, WHO CC UTS utilises global standards set by the World Health Organization to develop projects, consult, and advocate for quality education for health professionals. A stated key strength of the WHO CC UTS is its participation in transformative education where, in collaboration with international experts, it works to develop/refine educational courses for nurses and midwives in developing countries.
Capacity of WHOCCUTS to undertake the project in the required timeframe

The WHO CC UTS has core staff that would be assigned to undertake the review, with access to additional experts/advisers when required. The WHO CC UTS is supported by accessUTS, the consultancy arm of UTS. This means that the Centre has highly effective administrative and logistics facilities including project management support, financial management systems and reporting mechanisms. With consistent administration support the Centre can undertake large or small projects at any given time.

The WHO CC UTS and Faculty of Health have extensive experience in the provision of best practice consulting, project management (including large scale international program management), educational and professional development services to industry, government and the international community. With the UTS academic community and facilities at our disposal, we are uniquely positioned to offer tailored project and program management administration and logistics services.

CONSULTANCY

Consultancy is considered a vital component of our work at the WHO CC UTS, utilising and strengthening established relationships. For example, in collaboration with the National Department of Health Papua New Guinea (NDoH PNG) and the PNG Office of Higher Education, the WHO CC UTS has conducted Nursing and Community Health Worker Training School Audits of the eight Schools of Nursing and eleven Community Health Worker Training Schools in PNG.

The WHO CC has also played a consultancy role on several Midwifery Curriculum Development and Review projects across the Western Pacific Region. These reviews were accomplished in partnership with multi-sectoral stakeholders including: Secretary of Health, WHO, Offices of Higher Education and regulatory authorities.

Additionally, the DFAT Reproductive Health Training Unit Monitoring and Evaluation involved evaluation of a unit of travelling midwives visiting the most rural and remote areas in Papua New Guinea to conduct essential obstetric care (EOC) and emergency obstetric care (EmOC) courses to reproductive health workers.

RESEARCH

Producing a diverse range of research in the areas of health and workforce development is a primary objective for the WHO CC UTS. It is of paramount importance that research has a positive impact on maternal and child health in developing countries. Poor maternal health services and limited access to reproductive health is often accompanied by an inadequate supply and skill mix of staff needed to deliver health care interventions, commodities and information. To this end, funded by WHO Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, Health Workforce Research and Advice study, seeks to address these gaps by identifying evidence from task shifting experiences in small island states that have contributed to improved maternal health and access to reproductive health.

Additionally, the Maternal and Child Health Initiative (MCHI) generated six policies, eight research papers and one longitudinal study. Working in partnership with the Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Department of Health, educational institutes, and regulation, the MCHI project involved building capacity of midwifery educators, clinical facilitators, and the midwifery association and also involved working in remote hospitals providing obstetric support and training.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Through extensive and long-lasting professional relationships the WHO CC UTS is regularly involved in the process of informing governments and other institutions on issues related to health policy. The Centre has participated in human resources for health policy analysis nationally, regionally and globally.

The Centre’s work also impacts policy indirectly. For instance, in collaboration with WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO), WHO CC UTS has facilitated the collection of nursing and midwifery data for the WHO WPRO Nursing Databanks from the Pacific Island...
countries. This information will inform policy directions for WHO and other workforce policy bodies.

EDUCATIONAL STRENGTHENING

After more than a decade conducting short courses in low-income countries, the WHO CC UTS is well placed to provide this expertise. Collaboration with other academic institutions and growing established programs is an efficient use of resources and allows for up-skilling of health professionals in maternal, neonatal and child health; faculty development; human resources for health; and leadership.

As an example, in collaboration with the UNFPA Cambodia, the Cambodian University of Health Sciences (UHS) and UHS’s Technical School of Medical Care (TSMC), a team of midwifery educators from UTS, through the WHO CC UTS, provided technical support to strengthen midwifery education in Cambodia—the UNFPA Cambodia Midwifery Education Project. The project team completed three in-country visits to Phnom Penh in March, June and September 2018 to deliver nine subjects from the Midwifery Bridging Program. Fifty two female midwives attended from urban and rural areas across Cambodia with all completing the subjects and no withdrawals from the program.

The Australian Awards Fellowships program (since 2009) funded by DFAT and developed collaboratively with the South Pacific Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers Alliance (SPCNMOA) has resulted in 114 mid-level leaders attending two-week training at UTS. The training incorporates governance, social and economic leadership skills, using research evidence to inform decisions, SMART program design, stakeholder engagement and cultural competencies. Many projects implemented as a result of this program are focussed on maternal and child health.

Nursing and Midwifery Officers Alliance (SPCNMOA) has resulted in 114 mid-level leaders attending two-week training at UTS. The training incorporates governance, social and economic leadership skills, using research evidence to inform decisions, SMART program design, stakeholder engagement and cultural competencies. Many projects implemented as a result of this program are focussed on maternal and child health.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROJECT TEAM

The WHO CC UTS works on a small core staff. However, with each project we are able to draw on the skills and expertise of staff from the UTS Faculty of Health, the South Pacific Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers’ Alliance (SPCNMOA), relevant WHO Collaborating Centres regionally and globally, partners from a range of institutions within the health industry, academics, researchers, and health care professionals affiliated with the WHO CC UTS. Personnel typically involved in Midwifery projects are as follows:

Michele Rumsey is Director of WHO CC UTS. Ms Rumsey is an experienced international health care consultant and policy expert. She has expertise in nursing ethics, capacity building, human resources for health, consumer participation and nursing regulation.

Amanda Neill is a Program Manager with postgraduate studies in Population Health and Nutrition and a Master’s degree in International Social Development. The main focus of her work with WHO CC and UTS Faculty of Health is managing international consultancies and research projects including monitoring and evaluation.
**Associate Professor Linette Lock** has worked for many years as a lecturer in nursing and midwifery. She has extensive knowledge and experience in the health sector in developing countries, in particular Indonesia following the 2004 tsunami and Papua New Guinea.

**Professor Di Brown** has a national and international reputation in healthcare leadership and nursing education. She has extensive experience as both a clinician and academic. Di currently manages a large regional development project designed to build regional capacity in Asia-Pacific countries in managing disaster and emergencies. In 2015 Di was made an Officer (AO) in the General Division in the Order of Australia Honours for distinguished service to nursing through the delivery of quality care, professional development and nursing education, and to the international advancement of the profession throughout Asia and the Pacific.

**Professor Kathleen Baird** is the Professor of Midwifery in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. In her academic career, which stretches over two continents, Professor Baird’s work has a strong focus on many aspects of maternity care, particularly continuity of midwifery care and the health response to domestic and family violence and women’s health. Prior to her move to New South Wales, Kathleen’s service appointments included being a member of Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council and Deputy Chair of the Queensland Domestic and Family Death and Homicide Review Board.

**Dr Christine Catling** is Director of Midwifery Studies within the Faculty of Health at UTS and has been a midwife for 25 years. In 2015 she was the inaugural research fellow with the WHO CC UTS, working with the team on the Maternal and Child Health Initiative in Papua New Guinea. She coordinates the National Publicly-funded Homebirth Consortium and supports Higher Research Degree students within the Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health.

**Dr Deborah Fox** is registered as a midwife in South East Asia for 5 years, she collaborated with obstetric colleagues in 2011 to establish Singapore’s first midwifery continuity of care model. The current focus of her research is the promotion of freedom of movement and positioning in labour and birth as a strategy for optimising physiological processes.

**Dr Allison Cummins** has been a practising midwife for over 25 years and a midwifery educator for the past 15 years. Allison has worked in midwifery education in both the tertiary education and clinical settings. Allison completed her PhD in 2016, titled “Enabling New Graduate Midwives to work in Midwifery Continuity of Care Models”. This study led to publications and has research impact informing the business case for the introduction of New Graduate Midwives to work in Midwifery Led Continuity of Care.

**Rachel Smith** is a midwifery educator with more than 20 years of experience in midwifery practice, education and research. The majority of her work has been in education design, development and delivery. She is also a faculty member for the Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO) and Preparation in Maternity Safety (PIMS) courses and a member of the curriculum review team.

**Vanessa Scarf** is a midwifery lecturer and the course coordinator for the Graduate Diploma of Midwifery at UTS. Vanessa worked as a midwife in clinical practice until 2012 when she became the project coordinator of the Birthplace in Australia Project, a data linkage study investigating perinatal and maternal outcomes for women who give birth at home, in a birth centre or in hospital. She is currently undertaking a PhD in Midwifery, a cost analysis of giving birth in these three settings.

The Centre’s Advisory Board comprises UTS Health staff, Chief Nursing Officers from Samoa, Cook Islands, New Zealand and Australia and representatives from donor organisations. Our core partnership with the SPCNMOA informs our network of national, international, and regional collaborators.

**Dr Annabel Sheehy** is a currently practising midwife and a lecturer within the Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health at UTS. Annabel’s PhD, completed in 2016, centred upon workforce experiences and choices of early career midwives. Her research interest is midwifery workforce and education issues, whilst Annabel’s lecturing passion is Anatomy and Physiology. Annabel is the project manager for the implementation of a multi-disciplinary postgraduate Master of Women’s ad Children’s Health at UTS.

**Loretta Musgrave** is a registered midwife and nurse with 22 years of clinical/education experience who lectures in the Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health at UTS. Loretta is currently enrolled in a PhD and holds two scholarships. Her thesis aims to generate evidence to inform future development and utilisation of pregnancy planning and pregnancy specific mobile phone applications. Central to this body of work is the identification of the barriers and facilitators of maternal health behaviours that impact on stillbirth risk and preferences for provision of information in pregnancy for ethnically and culturally diverse groups of women.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

For more information, please visit our website or contact us. Email us and sign up to our Regional Update e-newsletter to stay informed.

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