

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we work and provide services and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and those yet to come.

We also acknowledge the courage and resilience of Aboriginal women who have birthed on these lands for thousands of years.

Clients' names have been changed throughout the report to honour their privacy.

Illustration and design by @suecroke_

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CHAIR'S REPORT

BABIES CONTINUE TO FIND
THEIR WAYS INTO OUR
LIVES AND, AT BIRTH FOR
HUMANKIND, WE'VE BEEN
BUSY ENSURING THIS IS A
WELL-SUPPORTED, POSITIVE
TIME FOR AN INCREASING
NUMBER OF FAMILIES.

Continuity of care has been in the spotlight alongside appropriate interpreter services, as government hold inquiries to improve perinatal services. We are proud of the voice we've contributed to addressing these issues, including our submission and presentation at the Inquiry into Perinatal Services, advancing our advocacy aims.

Sustainability continues to be a core focus as we look to long-term goals of advocacy, program expansion and greatest impact. Watch this space for the changes coming with fundraising and programs.

Taking steps towards an effective plan for sustainability has come with staff changes. The most significant to note is our change in CEO. With gratitude we farewell Olivia Myeza and with open arms welcome Ruth Dearnlev and the wealth of experience and know-how she brings. Our hugest thanks to our Programs Manager, Jen Branscombe, for stepping into Acting CEO during the transition and guiding things so fabulously during this time.

We've welcomed to the board, with great enthusiasm, Kirsty Burke and Olivia Mason. I'd also like to acknowledge Carly Lord for her valued contributions as a director these past years. We look forward to Carly's ongoing involvement in other significant ways with our work. Special thanks also to Stamatia Venetis and Carmen Hawker for their immense

contributions in helping shape our organisation's strong foundations so we can move into the future with strength.

Seeing the impact of our work reach far wider than just the women we support, I'm heartened by what the future holds in improved maternal health equity and a brighter future for all babies.

KIRSTAN FLANNERY
CHAIR & CO-FOUNDER



CEO'S REPORT

LIKE MANY OF YOU, IT WAS THE PERSONAL STORIES OF MOTHERS-TO-BE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE FACED PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND EARLY PARENTING WITHOUT APPROPRIATE CARE, THAT FIRST DREW ME TO BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND.

But what keeps me inspired and motivated, is that our impact extends so much further than the individuals we meet.

Our hands-on work models the respectful, accessible and appropriate care that we hope will one day be available to all parents.

Supported by our growing research, we are able to demonstrate to policy makers and the next generation of healthcare providers the impact that quality education, social support and continuity of care has on maternal and child health outcomes. This strengthens our capacity

to influence the maternal health system to achieve better health equity, working toward a key goal for the organisation.

Our growing presence and respect in this space was marked by the increased invitations to present our work and expertise to national media outlets, government and sector-wide forums.

I commenced as Chief Executive Officer in May 2018 and in this short time, we have continued to take significant steps to sustain our operations, expand our reach and increase our impact. And most importantly, I am delighted that we have now provided direct support to over 300 women.

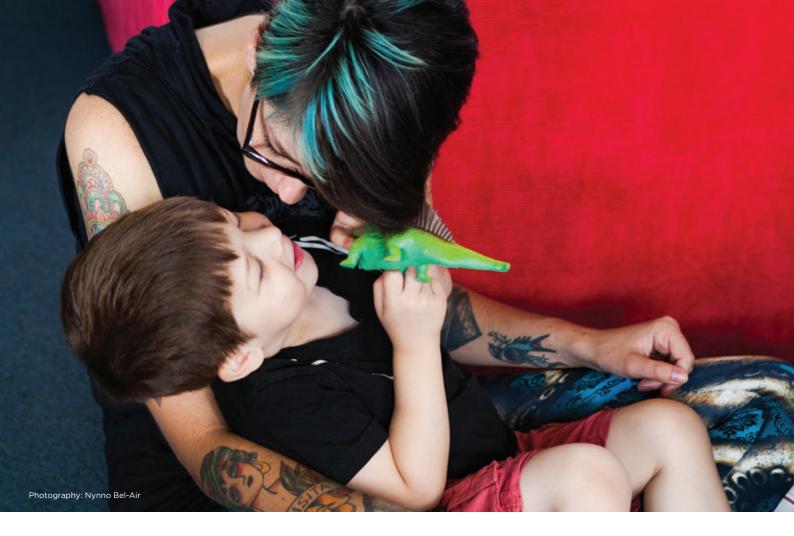
I am incredibly grateful for the dedication and professionalism of the team, who everyday advance the organisation further toward achieving its mission. Special thanks to our volunteers, who tirelessly donate their time and expertise.

Thanks also to our extended network of supporters, donors and partners who share our vision of a future where all women, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, have access to appropriate support, education and care during pregnancy, birth and early parenting.

I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Day.

Ruth Dearnley
Chief Executive Officer



WHO WE ARE

OUR BEGINNING

Our story began when 19 year-old Carly, was referred to a doula, Mei Lai.

Carly was pregnant and going through a difficult time in her life. Her mother had recently passed away and having only been in Melbourne a short time, she was almost entirely without a support network. Her social worker suggested she may benefit from a doula.

Carly was connected with Mei Lai, who volunteered her services as a doula, providing the practical and emotional support that Carly needed. With Mei Lai by her side, Carly gave birth to a beautiful baby boy.

It was a life-changing experience for both women. They knew countless other women experiencing hardship through their pregnancy could benefit from doula support.

BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND IS THE RESULT OF THEIR SHARED VISION.

Mei Lai served as the founding Chief Executive Officer, and Carly was appointed as one of the founding Board members.

They dreamed of reaching as many women in need as possible and building a culture of respect and celebration for birthing women and mothers.

OUR WHY

We know that many women do not receive the practical, social and emotional support that they need during pregnancy, childbirth and after the baby arrives.

Women from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, women experiencing homelessness, young mums, and those with a history of trauma and abuse face significant disparities in birth outcomes compared with the rest of the Victorian population. A decline in continuity of care for many mothers, especially those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, has contributed to less personalised support for mothers. This means that many will not be able to

access the information they need or have someone to advocate on their behalf. These mothers are more likely to need medical intervention at birth and are at greater risk of postnatal depression and anxiety. Their child is more likely to spend time in neonatal intensive care. This can have lasting impacts on the mother, child and extended family.

OUR PRESENT

Since our establishment as a not-for-profit organisation in April 2014, we have grown to be a respected and critical provider of complementary maternal health services.

Our work is based on research, evidence and experience and contributes to improved maternal and child health outcomes.

We exist to ensure that every mother has the care and support she needs during pregnancy, child birth and early parenting. By providing practical and personal birth support services and education programs, we strive to model best practice care to women experiencing social and financial hardship.

We are determinedly influencing the maternal health system to benefit all women - by raising awareness of barriers to care, educating healthcare providers on the benefits of doula support and advocating for improved access to holistic, mothercentred care for pregnant women, particularly women experiencing disadvantage.

This year we saw a 40% INCREASE IN REFERRALS FROM HOSPITALS, indicating that the formal health care system sees the need for our work and values our input.

OUR FUTURE

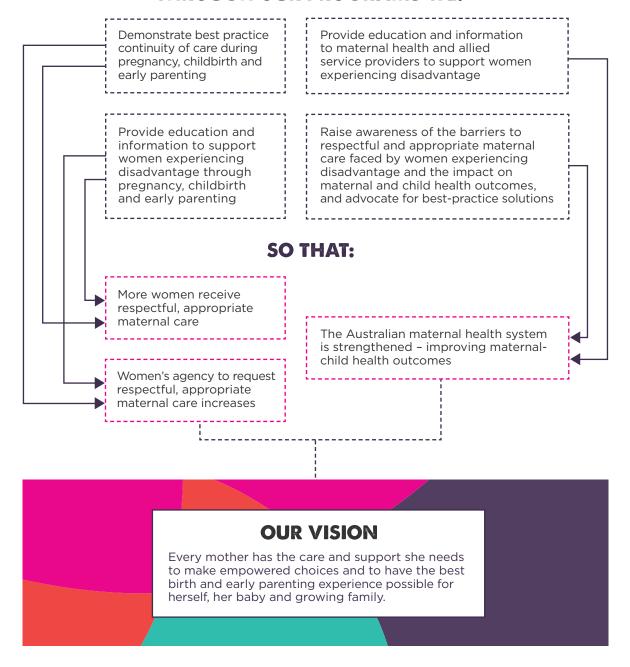
We will continue to provide support and practical services for women and advocate for changes to the Australian maternal health system, until all mothers can receive the support they need during pregnancy, childbirth and early parenting, regardless of their age, cultural heritage, or income.





WHAT WE DO

THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS WE:



OUR PROGRAMS

DOULA SUPPORT PROGRAM

Our Doula Support Program, the only one of its kind in Victoria, helps disadvantaged women develop the knowledge and agency to birth and care for their babies with confidence. Our support focuses on women experiencing known barriers to accessing quality maternal healthcare.

One birth at a time, we work to create a culture of equity and respect in the maternal health system, to build women's voice and agency to exercise informed choice and control in pregnancy, birth and early parenting.

To make this happen, we match women referred to us by case workers, social workers and healthcare providers with professionally trained volunteer doulas.

Our doulas provide tailored one-to-one care and support to each woman, providing a form of quality care within the existing clinical care framework. Because we know that to get birth right we need social connection, emotional resilience and access to simple practical support, all of which contributes to improved clinical outcomes.

HIGHLIGHTS



Expanding our reach

Our volunteer doulas provided one-to-one dedicated and tailored care to 86 women, birthing in nine of Melbourne's largest public hospitals across Melbourne metro and beyond.



Increasing referrals

- 20% increase in referrals from FY16-17
- More than 2.5 times as many referrals as FY15-16



Improving our ability to support diverse and complex clients

- This year our clients spoke more than 20 different primary languages, with 4 in 10 requiring the assistance of an interpreter
- An increasing number of our clients were also experiencing perinatal depression and/or anxiety as well as other complex risk factors such as mental health or a history of substance misuse
- Our doulas undertook a range of professional development sessions to better support our clients, including: cultural competence and working with interpreters through Centre for Ethnicity and Health, and understanding and supporting women experiencing perinatal depression, through PANDA



Training and inducting bicultural doulas

This year we trained and inducted eight bi-cultural doulas who were supported to complete intensive doula training through DONA international, delivered by Jenn Fontaine and Tanya Strusberg. We will continue our endeavours to diversify the face of birth support in Australia for women experiencing disadvantage, to help make more women feel safe, welcomed and respected in the birth space.



Growing and diversifying our volunteer doula team

- This year we welcomed 12 new doulas to Birth for Humankind
- More than 40 volunteers supported at least one client at a birth this year
- Two of our doulas supported more than 10 women
- Our team of volunteer doulas now speak more than a dozen languages between them, bringing rich cultural histories to the work of the Birth for Humankind team



Building new referral pathways

- This year we received referrals from more than 30 different service providers, eight referring for the first time
- Six in 10 of our referrals came through hospitals and health networks
- Expanded our reach to work in hospitals outside of metropolitan
 Melbourne for the first time

This growing demand for our service from staff working within clinical settings demonstrates a broader understanding of quality maternal healthcare and a realisation of the importance of the social and emotional care we provide as a component of quality, women-centred care.

Future focus: building on our success

- Exciting future areas of program growth will include diversifying the support we offer to include extended or postnatal-only support and tailored antenatal-only support packages
- We are planning professional development training to better support clients who have experienced complex trauma and women experiencing family violence.
- We will be building partnerships in areas of greatest demand, particularly the postnatal doula practice and doula practice training tailored for student midwives



EDUCATION PROGRAM

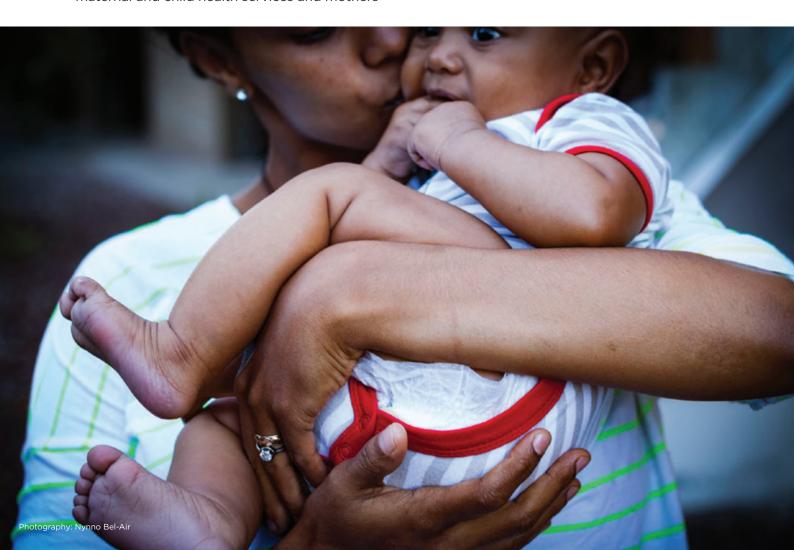
Our Education Program provides women experiencing financial and social hardship with tailored antenatal education delivered in accessible and welcoming group learning environments.

Our two current programs, Mothering 101 and Navigating the Maternal Health System in Australia, focus specifically on the needs of young mums aged up to 25 and women from new migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

We know that women from these communities are less likely to seek support from mainstream maternal and child health services and mothers' groups. They are more likely to feel isolated, confused, misunderstood and disrespected when trying to access antenatal information.

They are also less able to navigate complex healthcare systems. For instance, newly arrived women are often spoken to in a language they don't understand, without a translator present. They report feeling as though their cultural knowledge and previous experience is disrespected or ignored.

Our Education Program focuses its transformative work on laying the foundations for a positive birth and early parenting experience in a safe and respectful forum.







HIGHLIGHTS



Working with more women than ever before

- This year we supported 46 women through our education programs
- The women we supported spoke eight different primary languages, and many were experiencing a range of social hardship factors including homelessness, family violence and history of complex trauma



Testing new iterations of Navigating the Maternal Health System in Australia

- Following last year's pilot of our three-hour in-depth information sessions, this year we worked in partnership with a number of community support services to deliver shorter small-group discussions sessions for mixed-language African women's groups in Yarra City Council
- Feedback from these sessions allowed us to refine our toolkit of visual resources

Future focus: reshaping Mothering 101

- An extensive evaluation process was undertaken on the pilot program, informing our iterative framework and the design of stage two of the program
- A strong focus was applied to building strategic relationships with hospital and community service providers. The next iteration will be implemented in collaboration with Sunshine Hospital in 2018
- We will continue to strengthen our existing relationships with hospital and community service providers, and build partnerships in areas of greatest demand, including the North-west and Southern regions of Victoria



RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Our Research and Advocacy Program aims to develop a solid body of evidence to underpin the work that we do, and to use this evidence to influence positive change within the Australian maternal health system.

Birth for Humankind's Research Program

Following commencement in early 2017, our PhD Candidate and Evaluation Researcher Kerryn O'Rourke is now deep in the stages of theory development.

Kerryn's PhD research is a realist evaluation of our Doula Support Program, focusing on the core question: 'for whom does the doula program work and not work and why?'

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to inform the doula program's refinement, sustainability and scalability and inform our advocacy program.



HIGHLIGHTS



Contributing to policy change in the public health sector

In August 2017 Birth for Humankind made a submission into the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Perinatal Services. Our submission called for a series of important changes in our current system, including:

- Broadening the definition of 'quality care' to include necessary social and emotional support beyond clinical care, and recognising the important work that community services such as Birth for Humankind do to fill key health service gaps for women experiencing disadvantage
- Working to improve accessibility of best-practice continuity of care programs for women experiencing disadvantage, in particular women from new migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds
- Improving cultural competency of the current clinical healthcare staff in order to best support Victoria's increasingly diverse birthing women

In June this year the Family and Community Development Committee tabled their final report into Perinatal Services, which quotes and responds to many of Birth for Humankind's submission recommendations. We look forward to working closely with both government and other service providers to realise many of the recommended changes in policy and practice.



Contributing to the growing body of evidence on what works to support pregnant women experiencing disadvantage

In February 2018 Birth for Humankind participated in a research project facilitated by RMIT in partnership with Launch Housing, looking at best-practice service provision to pregnant women who are experiencing homelessness.

We will continue to build evidence on the value of our work by participating and leading on more collaborative research projects.

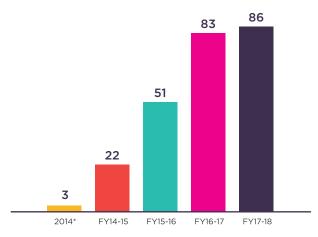






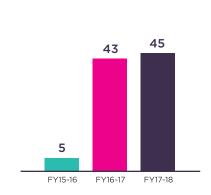
OUR GROWTH

Each one of these numbers represents a pregnant woman supported, a baby nurtured, a community strengthened and health systems influenced. So while we are about so much more than numbers, we are proud of what our growth represents.



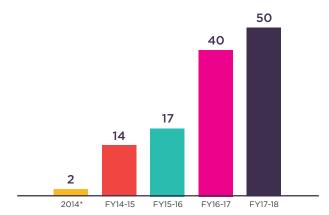
Total number of women supported through our Doula Support Program

2459



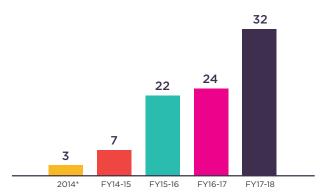
Total number of women supported through our Education Program

93º



Total number of doulas recruited

689



Total number of referral agencies

49 🛱

^{*}Reporting formally commenced in FY14-15

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



Supported our 200th DOULA SUPPORT PROGRAM CLIENT

We know that the continuity of care provided by a doula can significantly impact maternal and child health outcomes for women experiencing disadvantage and their child. That's why we were so pleased to achieve this significant milestone.



Inducted our 68th DOULA

Our doulas volunteer thousands of hours of support to our clients. The more doulas who receive our induction training, the more prepared we are to provide support to women who need it and the greater our presence amongst the doula network in Victoria.



Trained EIGHT new BICULTURAL DOULAS

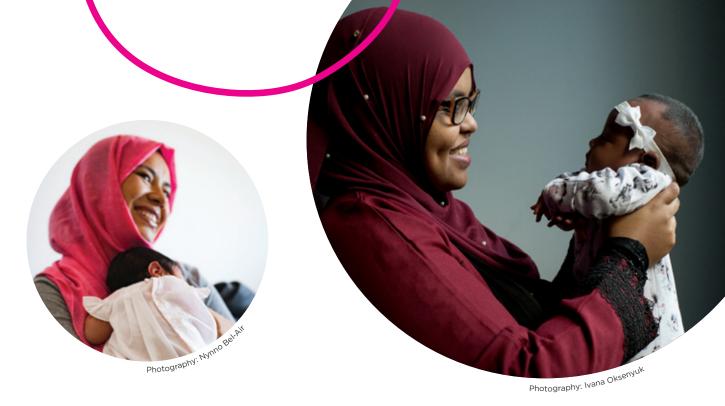
We want to provide women from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds with the opportunity to receive support in their own language, which helps to overcome some of the language and cultural barriers they face in navigating the Australian maternal health system. Our team of volunteer doulas now speak more than a dozen languages between them.



Awarded TWO doula training SCHOLARSHIPS

We are thrilled with the generosity from the professional doula community. A number of individuals and organisations have offered scholarships to our volunteer doulas, including a place in both Foundational and Postnatal Doula Training with Sunderai Felich at Dial a Doula, and a place in Spinning Babies meets Birthwork with Jenny Blythe and Fiona Hallinan.

These professional development opportunities are one important way that we give back to our dedicated volunteer doula team and also ensure our team is best-placed to support the women referred to us.





Increased our REPUTATION and VISIBILTY

Recognition and respect for our important work has continued to grow. Notably we have been called on by Sky News, SBS and other media outlets to raise awareness of our work and contribute to debate on related issues. This year we also participated in the inaugural Australian Doula Conference, leading a session on working with women from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds, building new relationships with experts and practitioners in the doula field as a result.



Invited by the **PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA** to input into the Inquiry into Perinatal Services

Our expertise was acknowledged when our submission into the Inquiry was well received. Our message was heard loud and clear and we look forward to working with the Family and Community Development Committee over the year ahead to implement the report's recommendations.



Welcomed our first CLIENT-TURNED-DOULA

A particularly meaningful milestone. We were delighted to welcome not only our first client-turned doula, Anahita, but also a recipient of the bi-cultural doula training, funded by Birth for Humankind.

OUR CLIENTS

"The volunteer work we do with Birth for Humankind is big, but boy it fills my cup. I meet the most incredible women and hear some fascinating stories. I am touched by their lives and WHEN THEY OPEN UP AND SHARE THEIR STORIES I AM IN AWE OF THEM and my perspective shifts." -Bethany Meakin

Our admiration for the women we work with knows no bounds.

Birth for Humankind volunteer doula, Bethany Meakin, captures it perfectly.

In **FY17-18** of 86 women referred approximately





6.5 IN 10 were newly arrived migrants/refugees or asylum seekers



7 IN 10 had no support person



1 IN 2 were experiencing/at risk of perinatal depression



1 IN 2 were experiencing mental health, drug and/or alcohol issues



1 IN 4 were experiencing homelessness



1 IN 4 were aged 24 and under

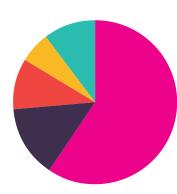


6 IN 10 did not speak English as a primary language

Primary languages spoken were ENGLISH, ARABIC, PERSIAN (FARSI) SPANISH, OROMO, SOMALI Our clients spoke 21 DIFFERENT PRIMARY LANGUAGES



1 IN 7 spoke Arabic as a primary language



FY17-18 Referrals by agency type

- 59% Hospital/Health Network
- 14% Migrant/Refugee Support Services
- 10% Birth for Humankind
- 6% Self-referrals
- 10% Community Support Services







OUR WORK IN WORDS

We have heard from the women we work with that they feel better prepared for birth, more confident to speak up, less isolated and more positive about their birth experiences. They feel better connected with other support services and more

able to exercise choices in care – they feel both respected and heard.

These are powerful outcomes that demonstrate the impact of our work. But the power comes comes from hearing it directly from the women we support and our incredible volunteer doulas who share their journey.

These inspire us to do more: reach more women and create more change.

"With her strength, joy and maternal tenderness, one morning on Christmas Eve together with C Fernanda and P Trevi Evi she [Elizabeth Mazeyko] disappeared my fears, made me feel strong, safe and protected... for hours later, with my partner taking my left hand and Elizabeth with my right hand we welcomed the world to our little girl.

For me, the most important thing in this life is to leave footprint in the mind and hearts of others. She certainly is leaving her print in many. 1000 times thank you.. eternally thank you for being you, for accepting us and for being... I know you are a gift sent by my angels in heaven."

- Client

"Supporting women who would normally go without support has been an incredibly humbling experience for me personally. I have met the most incredible women from so many corners of the world and seen them - heard their stories, held their hands, embraced their families and at times their communities.

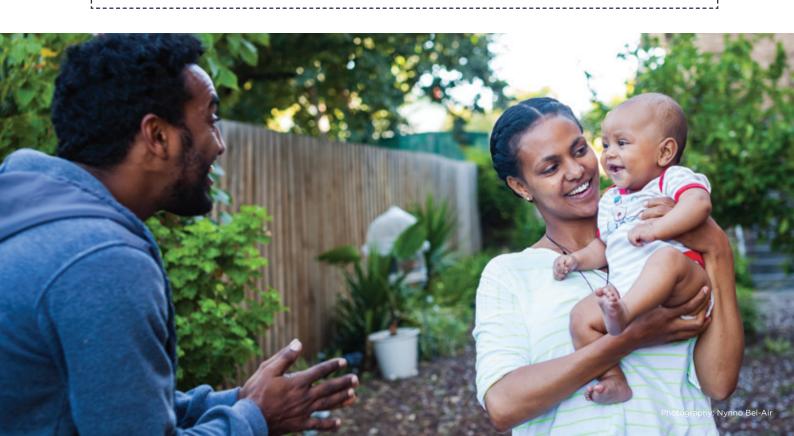
This work really is the epitome of the butterfly effect... one birth at a time we can make the world a better place. The simplicity of holding a woman through her birthing experience, a woman that I possibly would never have met or crossed paths with outside of this work - and truly seeing her has been profound."

- Bethany Meakin, Doula of the Year

"The care, respect, comfort and information that Claire [Wyborn] provides is a role unto is a role unto its own and cannot be replaced by midwives and doctors. It is like having my mother by my side. It was an incredible journey that I will never forget. Nothing was missing from my birth experience. I am thankful for everything that Claire provided throughout my pregnancy, birth and into parenthood.

I don't know how to thank you.
The incredible work you're doing during and after birth is the experience I will carry with me. Thank you so much for being there.
I had the best time giving birth to my beautiful daughter - without you I wouldn't have done."

- Client





ANAHITA: FROM CLIENT TO DOULA

YOUNG MUM, MIDWIFE, MIGRANT, BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND CLIENT AND NOW - OUR FIRST EVER CLIENT-TURNED-DOULA.

Just thirteen months
after receiving Birth for
Humankind's doula support
services, Anahita became our
first client-turned-doula.

Originally from Afghanistan, Anahita is a midwife. She trained and worked in Kabul, where she regularly assisted with deliveries. She has always been driven by a commitment to serve people, especially women and her passion for education and learning.

In 2016 Anahita and her husband emigrated to Australia, and shortly after she fell pregnant. Fortunately, Anahita found her way to our young mums' education and social support program, Mothering 101, where she learnt about birthing in Australia and also helped run some sessions.

Initially fearful of what lay ahead, having witnessed traumatic births in Afghanistan, her doula Phoebe helped her through the pregnancy and child birth.

"She supported me physically during the labour, but I can't remember my labour much. I know I held Phoebe's hands and she said 'well done Anahita, you can, you are strong' and it helped me. She massaged my back, my shoulders. She is like my family member. After this, I don't forget her, her help, her support and I want to be in contact with her after this." Her own experience inspired her.

"AFTER THE BIRTH OF ASMA, I WAS WONDERING 'CAN I BE A DOULA IN THE FUTURE AS A PART OF BIRTH FOR HUMANKIND?' BECAUSE I HAD A REALLY AMAZING EXPERIENCE.

Anahita joined seven other bicultural doulas who were inducted into our program this year. This is her first job in Australia, as she is not yet eligible to work as a midwife here.

We know her experience, compassion and commitment will have a positive and uplifting impact on the women she supports.



OUR PEOPLE

We are incredibly fortunate to have a skilled, hard-working and dedicated Board, staff and group of volunteers who are committed to achieving our vision and mission.

OUR BOARD



Kirstan Flannery Chair & Co-Founder



Kirsty Burke Company Secretary (from August 2017)



Raj Gopiraj Treasurer



Mei Lai Swan Co-Founder & Director



Olivia Mason Director (from August 2017)



Carly Lord Director (until March 2018)

OUR TEAM (as of July 2018)



Ruth Dearnley CEO (from May 2018)



Annabel Davies
Cheif Operations Officer



Jen Branscombe Programs Manager



Rebeccah Bartlett Enterprise Development Lead



Cressida Blumson Communications and Fundraising Lead



Kester Naismith Operations Coordinator



Cath Wright
Doula Program
Supervisor



Kristine Balfour Doula Program Supervisor

Thanks to outgoing staff



Olivia Myeza CEO (until January 2018)



Carmen Hawker Communications Manager (until June 2018)



Stamatia Venetis Chief Finance Officer (until February 2018)

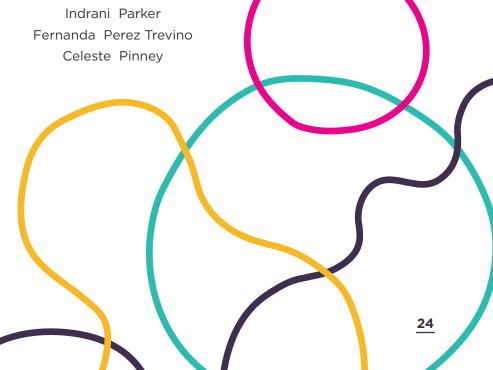
OUR VOLUNTEER DOULAS

We owe enormous gratitude to our volunteer doulas who make our work possible. Our doulas are there for our clients during hospital appointments, labour and birth and in the challenging early days and weeks of parenting. Their kindness, dedication and passion for our work never ceases to amaze us.

Maymun Ahmed Coco Axford Kristine Balfour Cecilia Barberis Rebeccah Bartlett Lalise Benti Olika Laura Lee Berlingieri Emma Blumer Sarah Burnell Paulette D'argent Kate Dawson Tess De la Garma Avse Deveci Phoebe Ely Reyyan Emniyet Barbara Ferguson Kirstan Flannery Dee Fraser Shoqoufa Hydari Wafa Ibrahim Julie-Anne Isaacson

Carolin Jalhom Debra Knight Simona Kubingerova Bridget Loats Elizabeth Mazeyko Bethany Meakin Susan Mitchell Ingrid Moe Jaclyn Molloy Erika Munton Farzana Muzafari Romy Norich Stephanie Norquay Anna O'Brien Indrani Parker Celeste Pinney

Faith Popna
Kiersten Quinn
Bridie Ryan
Bubbles Segall
Rena Sergeeva Pashchuk
Jae Stewart
Tanya Strusberg
Liz Varney
Bec Wisby
Claire Wyborn





OUR SUPPORTERS

Our achievements are enabled by the generosity of our supporters. Our grateful thanks go to:

OUR MAJOR DONORS AND GRANT MAKERS:













OUR IN-KIND SUPPORTERS:

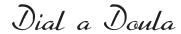


















OUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

We are incredibly grateful to the generous donations we receive from our community. Thank you for standing beside the women we support. Your contributions make a lasting difference.

OUR FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 30 June, 2018

	\$	\$
	2018	2017
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	124,238	110,316
Term Deposits	200,000	370,000
Trade & other receivables	14,175	8,552
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	338,413	488,868
TOTAL ASSETS	338,413	488,868
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade & other payables	45,982	61,820
Restricted Use Donations in Advance	200,000	350,000
Short term provisions	15,123	11,626
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	261,105	423,446
TOTAL LIABILITIES	261,105	423,446
NET ASSETS	77,308	65,422
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
Unrestricted Reserves	77,308	65,422
Restricted Reserves	-	-
TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS	77,308	65,422

STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS & OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME for the year ended 30 june, 2018

	\$	\$
	2018	2017
CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENSES BY NATURE		
Revenue	407,153	413,735
PROGRAM COSTS		
Doula Support	153,683	99,763
Education	10,904	31,192
Research	13,427	41,451
Personnel and Operations	139,839	145,093
Communications and Fundraising	77,415	65,491
Surplus before income tax expense	1,885	30,745
Income tax expense	-	-
NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	1.885	30.745

<u>28</u>



Thank you for supporting Birth for Humankind.

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