



# How the experiences of the Broken Hill Midwifery Group Practice Midwives can inform remote midwife-led models of care: An Appreciative Inquiry study



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**Introduction:** Midwifery continuity of care models, or Midwifery Group Practice (MGP), are disproportionately available in metropolitan compared to non-metropolitan areas. Evidence shows MGP improves outcomes and experiences for women and Midwives, however historically MGP has been considered unsustainable for a rural/remote setting. In a remote mining town Far West of New South Wales, the Broken Hill MGP (BHMGP) was launched July 2015 in an effort to offer a gold-standard maternity service for the women and Midwives in the community.

**Aim:** To gain insight into the experiences of the BHMGP Midwives with the intent of making recommendations to improve the BHMGP itself, as well as assist other rural Maternity Services seeking to implement MGP.

**Method:** An Appreciative Inquiry methodology informed the collection of three data sets: one visual reflection focus group, eight individual interviews and anonymous individual survey. Data was coded and transcribed verbatim then thematically colour coded for analysis. To assist with researcher reflexivity, principles of Ethnography, specifically Participant Observation were used.

**Findings:** Four main findings are discussed: the experiences of Midwives in the BHMGP, recommendations to improve the BHMGP, recommendations for other rural and remote Health Services wishing to implement MGP and the future of rural and remote MGP. Each of these four areas of discussion contain specific themes and recommendations relevant to rural and remote MGP.

**Conclusion:** The experiences described by the BHMGP Midwives, while specific to the context of Broken Hill, contribute to the evidence supporting the implementation of rural and remote MGP. These descriptions enabled recommendations to be developed for the BHMGP and other rural and remote Health Services wishing to implement MGP. The future potential of rural and remote MPG is also described in the context of the experiences of BHMGP Midwives in terms of what can be learned from their experiences.

**Implications:** This study contributes to gaps in literature concerned with rural and remote MGP in Australia. By realising the study's objectives, a valuable contribution has been made to the BHMGP itself, other Health Services, the rural and remote Midwifery workforce and the communities it serves.

**Key words:** Midwifery Group Practice, rural, continuity, midwife, experience

*For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'*

Thea is a Registered Midwife with a Master's degree in Midwifery, who filled the Project Officer role to establish a Midwifery Group Practice at Broken Hill which commenced in 2015. Thea has been responsible for evaluating the MGP model of care and sharing the outcomes with other rural health services. Thea hopes to use her research skills to continue improving rural maternity services, something she feel absolutely passionate about.



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