



Issue 7

July 25

Midwifery Moments Newsletter

News and events from the Brisbane Midwifery Society

Meet the team

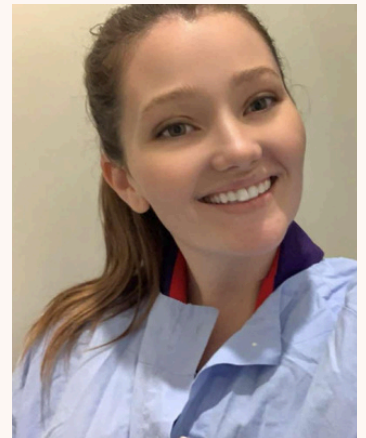
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Emma - President



Daynaira - Vice President



Ash - Secretary

Become a leader on Campus Make a difference



President



Vice
President



Secretary



Treasurer

Are you passionate about making a difference, building connections, and growing as a leader? The Brisbane Midwifery Society is looking for enthusiastic and committed students to take on key leadership roles in our student-led committee in 2026.

By getting involved, you'll:

- Develop valuable leadership and teamwork skills
- Build networks with peers, faculty, and industry professionals
- Contribute to a vibrant midwifery community
- Showcase the core values and mission of ACU in action.

This is your chance to lead, inspire, and shape the experience of midwifery students across all years. Whether you're in your first year or heading into your final year, your voice and energy matter.

Be part of something meaningful, Volunteer today and help us create a stronger, connected future for midwifery at ACU

Email your interest to - midwiferysociety.brisbane@myacu.edu.au

Short-term International Study Experience - STISE

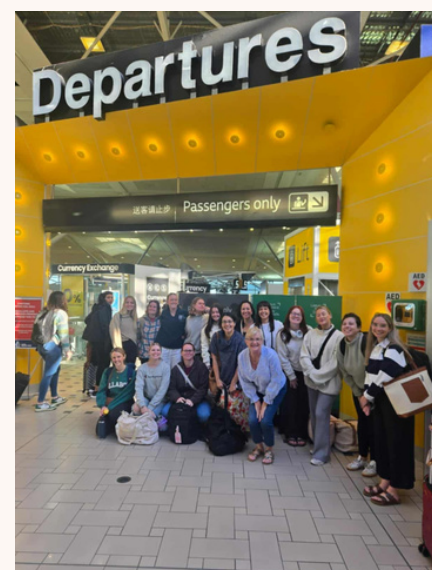
ACU's Faculty of Health Sciences offers clinical and professional practice placements or community engagement activities around the world. These short-term experiences are facilitated through our overseas partners. Most STISEs are offered in your final years of study. These experiences are available to second- and third-year Bachelor of Midwifery students enrolled in unit MIDW351 Global Perspectives on Midwifery.



Vanuatu

Interview with Carolyn 3rd year

How did the midwifery practices in Vanuatu differ from what you've seen at home? Women don't really labour in BS. They labour at home or on the hospital grounds until they're at least 8cm dilated before being admitted to BS. They birth semi recumbent as directed by staff and they have no pain relief options at all. They are supported postnatally by family that sleep on the floor next to their beds in the postnatal ward.



What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them? The language barrier was the biggest challenge. It's hard to support people when you can't speak their language. Learning as much local language on the fly as I could helped, and lots of non-verbal charades.

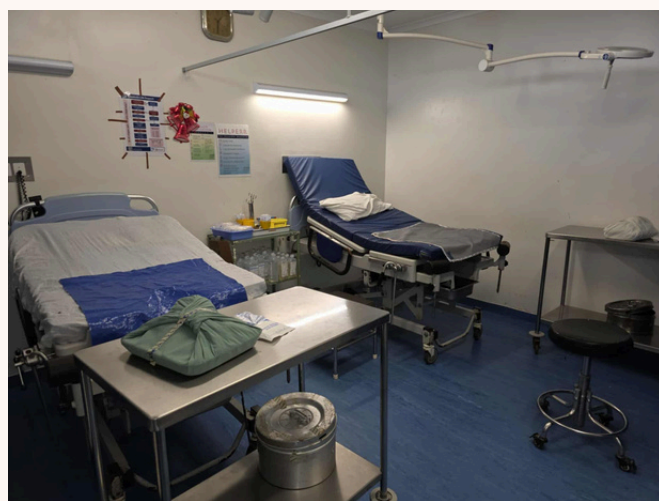
What was the most memorable moment during your placement? Being given autonomy that would never be given at home. I was doing vaginal examinations to estimate cervical dilation and effacement and monitoring contractions and CTG mostly independently for women in labour to be admitted to the ward. It helped me learn to trust myself and what I've learned so far this degree. And the final night of the village stay was also amazing. So much joy in one little place.



Short-term International Study Experience - STISE



How has this international experience influenced your goals as a future midwife? It's given me an appreciation of the importance of trusting myself. Self belief is the first step to becoming the midwife I hope to be. I have been so focused on the myriad things I don't yet know that I haven't stopped to reflect on how much I've learnt through the degree. The trip improved both my confidence and my competence.



How did the experience shape your understanding of culturally safe care? Communication is crucial to good care, especially when you speak a different language to the women you're caring for. Listen, listen, listen. Listen to understand, not just to respond. Watch for non-verbal cues of behaviour that can help bridge the language gap. And above all, be respectful. Just because our way of doing things is different, doesn't make it inherently better. Everyone is shaped by their own cultural influences and different doesn't mean bad, it just means different.



Were there any unexpected lessons you took away from the community or health workers? Most of the midwives in Vanuatu don't have degrees. They train as nurses rather than midwives, and then specialise in the hospital. That said, they are an absolute wealth of information and experience and being respectful and deferential went a long way to being given lots of autonomy to manage labours and births.

What advice would you give to other students considering an STISE placement? Be open. Not everything you'll see will be positive and in fact can be really confronting. There might be tears. And rats. But if you're open to just taking everything in, you will have an amazing time and an incredible learning experience.

Short-term International Study Experience - STISE



India

Interview with Rachel 3rd year

What inspired you to take part in the STISE program?

I absolutely love to travel, especially to countries that are so different to where we live and offer a different perspective on life. When I heard that ACU offers an opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture and clinical settings within another country I just knew that I had to do this.



Village community health association - Where we were given shawls and flower necklaces

How did the midwifery practices in India differ from what you've seen at home?

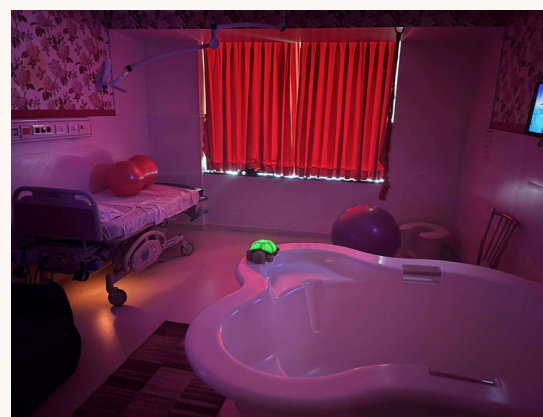
We actually visited several different health facilities throughout our stay and each one had a different way of practicing and level of care and support offered to their women. For the majority of women in India, they are cared for in a system that does not honour Woman Centred Care and placed in the care of nurses that are trained in labour and birth however are not midwives. Their settings were very clinical, and women birthed on their back without pain relief. We did however visit a facility that honours women and the practice of midwifery and had a holistic way of practice, however the midwives were only allowed to care for the women who were low risk and any women who were high risk received care from obstetricians and birth nurses.



Birth Nurses and student nurses in the Maternity ward in St Theresa Hospital

What was the most memorable moment during your placement?

Visiting the HIV orphanage was just so heartwarming. The children were so welcoming and put on such a beautiful show for all of us. We all danced together after the show and all of the children were just so happy. All of the amazing sights that we saw were incredible also and most of the people that we encountered were just so lovely.



The difference in labour wards between St Theresa's Hospital and the Fernandez Stork House

Short-term International Study Experience - STISE

What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?

The language barrier in the clinical setting was huge, this was with the women receiving care and also with the clinical staff. Many times, we were told to go into rooms and observe procedures without first confirming consent with the women, something that is impressed on us from the beginning of our degree. It was really hard to articulate to the staff due to the language barrier, therefore at times we made the decision not to enter a room.



Delivering breastfeeding education to nursing students

How did the experience shape your understanding of culturally safe care?

This experience has given me a greater understanding of how important communication is, especially non-verbal communication. Taking the time to understand facial expressions, especially during a conversation or a procedure is important. Through fear to speak up or a lack of understanding we can inflict trauma on women that is completely unintentional. If we take the time to ensure women in our care understand us and feel safe, we are a step closer to ensuring informed consent is provided.

Were there any unexpected lessons you took away from the community or health workers?

Watching care and procedures being undertaken that do not align with my philosophy was hard. For the majority of our clinical experiences in India it was observational rather than hands on, so the ability to advocate was limited. However, while this may seem like a negative, it has actually provided me with a greater appreciation for advocacy and knowing that we play a massive role in our care to ensure that we always advocate for women and their wishes.

How has this international experience influenced your goals as a future midwife?

Even more now than I did before, I want to see the midwifery landscape in Australia morph into a full continuity model for all no matter the risk factors or cost. I want to play a part in the advocacy for the change in care as well as become an endorsed Midwife so that I can provide full continuity for the woman and families in my care.



Shopping in peak hour
- With a call to prayer



Mehndi, AKA henna, is a paste associated with positive spirits and good luck

What advice would you give to other students considering an STISE placement?

Do it if you can, you won't regret it. You will see things that you can't unsee, but you will also have humbling experiences as well as connect with a bunch of likeminded students.

Short-term International Study Experience - STISE



Timor Leste

Interview with Tani 3rd year

What inspired you to take part in the STISE program?

I am really interested in practicing midwifery across rural communities in Australia and I saw this opportunity as a chance to learn from other cultures that support physiological birth in rural settings.

How did the midwifery practices in Timor Leste differ from what you've seen at home?

Midwifery in Timor has a deep grounding in physiological birth and trust in women. There is no pain relief available, only the 'natural epidural' as the midwives describe it with a smile. Labouring women are confined to very small birth spaces, and everyone gives birth in lithotomy position. There are limited sanitation practices in the hospital settings. After birth they are in open postnatal rooms with lots of beds and no privacy. Breastfeeding rates are high >95% as there is limited access to formula, clean water and sanitation practices.

What was the most memorable moment during your placement?

Visiting the rural clinics out of the capital city was really fantastic. We could see that physiological birth was supported well and it felt welcoming and calm. Also the bond we made with the midwifery students in Timor Leste was very special. It was incredible to share knowledge and ways of knowing with the students, including working with them across the language barriers that existed.



How did the experience shape your understanding of culturally safe care?

This experience showed us that you really need to speak the local language to provide culturally safe care. We weren't involved in any clinical care whilst we were there and I think that was a great thing because we couldn't have provided safe care without language.

Short-term International Study Experience - STISE

What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?

A personal challenge for me was feeling my white privilege everywhere I went. Sometimes it was very uncomfortable. An example was when we were on a hospital tour and we were just taken to birth suite and the curtains were flung wide open on a labouring women and we were just gawking at her in labour, her dignity was stripped bare with no consent, that was very hard. Also, running water and rubbish collection services is something we take for granted in Australia too. We are very privileged.

Were there any unexpected lessons you took away from the community or health workers?

It was surprising to learn that once midwifery students have graduated they must give back one year of service to the ministry of health without a salary because their university education is free. They also don't get a choice in where they are posted for their graduate year, many will have to move hours away from their families. Once they have finished this graduate year they will earn about \$6000USD per year, the cost of our two week trip!



How has this international experience influenced your goals as a future midwife?

Visiting the community clinics in Timor Leste which are really well resourced showed me that more resourced maternity services need to exist in Australia so that women have access to services without have to drive long distances or relocate for maternity care. We can do much better in Australia and I plan to advocate for rural communities throughout my future career.

What advice would you give to other students considering an STISE placement?

This is a fabulous experience to take if you are able. For me, it was a wonderful time to spend with a circle of passionate women all coming from different walks of life but united in one goal of serving women through the birth continuum. This was invaluable and I have made lifelong friends because of it. It is also great to step outside your everyday sphere and learn from others.





Learning Through Care: A USiM's Journey in the postnatal ward.

By Emma - Undergraduate Student in Midwifery



As a USiM working on a postnatal ward, the learning never stops. Each day brings new opportunities to support mothers, babies, and families, while growing in confidence and capability. As an Undergraduate Student in Midwifery (USiM), my role goes beyond clinical skills: it's about building relationships, learning through service, and preparing for the transition to a graduate midwife.

What does a USiM do in the Postnatal Ward?

In the postnatal setting, USiMs are an essential part of the care team. Under the guidance of registered midwives, I assist with:

- Postnatal observations (maternal and neonatal)
- Discharge education, helping women feel confident going home with their newborn
- Breastfeeding support, offering encouragement or linking with lactation consultants
- Documentation and handover support

Alongside clinical care, I often take on responsibilities similar to an Assistant in Nursing (AIN), including:

- Bed making and linen changes
- Restocking clinical supplies
- Assisting with cleaning tasks
- Engaging with patients and families, offering emotional support and comfort

While these may seem like simple tasks, they are the building blocks of compassionate care, and critical for the smooth functioning of the ward.



Learning Through Care: A USiM's Journey in the postnatal ward.

Benefits of Working in Postnatal Care as a USiM

1. Deepening Woman-Centered Practice

Postnatal care allows time to talk, listen, and connect. I've learned how to truly be with woman - to understand her individual needs and provide tailored support.

2. Building Clinical Confidence

Monitoring vital signs, assessing feeding and bonding, and providing education all sharpen my clinical skills. Every interaction helps prepare me for the demands of the graduate year.

3. Understanding Teamwork and Workflow

By taking on AIN duties, I've gained insight into how crucial every role is - from support staff to senior midwives. It's also taught me time management and how to prioritize in a busy environment.

4. Becoming Resource-Savvy

Restocking and preparing spaces has helped me learn the tools of the trade - from medical supplies to perineal care packs - making me more efficient and confident in knowing where things are and how they're used.

Growing Into a Midwife

This role is more than a placement; it's a bridge to professional practice. Every task, every woman I care for, shapes the kind of midwife I'm becoming. I've learned to communicate clearly, ask for help when needed, and reflect honestly on my performance.

Preparing for Graduation and Beyond

As I look toward graduation, I carry with me a toolkit of skills and insights gained on the postnatal ward. I feel more prepared to:

- Manage a postnatal load independently
- Deliver clear discharge education
- Work collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams
- Support women through the transition to parenthood
- Advocate for gentle, respectful, evidence-based care

Final Words

Being a USiM on the postnatal ward isn't just about learning - it's about becoming. It's the daily practice of patience, presence, and professionalism. It's where I've grown not only as a student midwife, but as a future colleague, carer, and advocate.

Look out for Hospitals advertising these roles early December 😊

Upcoming Events

WEBINAR

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION







SPEAKER: JOSH MARSHALL
 DIPLOMA OF ACCESS CONSULTING,
 MASTER OF DISABILITY &
 INCLUSION, BN, MEMGN, MCDM,
 CERT IV TAE.

DATE: WED, 27TH AUG
TIME: STARTS @ 6PM
ZOOM: LINK EMAILED

More info:
aculife.acu.edu.au/nursingbrisbane/events/

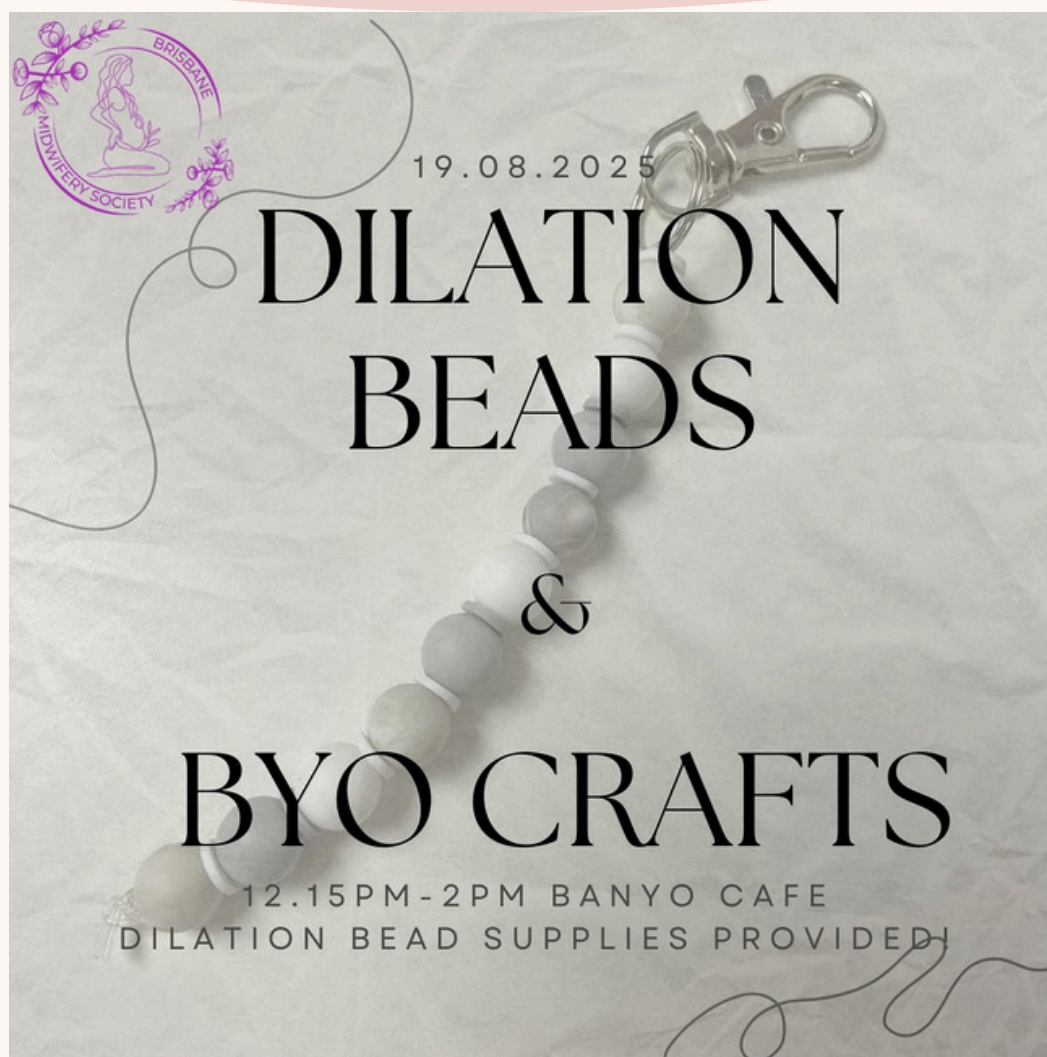
Josh Marshall is an Access Consultant from @inclusionaccess (<https://www.inclusionaccess.com.au/about-us>). Josh started his career as an RN and then moved into the world of disability and accessibility. He is a wealth of knowledge (Diploma of Access Consulting, Master of disability & inclusion, BN, MEmgN, MCDM, Cert IV TAE).

Josh would like to offer his time to deliver a free webinar that covers the different types of disabilities clinicians may come across in their work, and the different aspects of communication that we may need to employ or be aware of.

We believe this webinar is a great opportunity for all allied health clinicians to expand their communication skills and gain some important CPD points. Register on ACU Life and we will see you there!

Event link: <https://au.cglink.me/2iC/r60650>

Upcoming Events



Dilation beads & bring your own craft at the ACU, Banyo cafe.

What are dilation beads? Dilation beads are a visual and tactile aid consisting of beads and string. Each bead representing 1cm to illustrate the progress of cervical dilation. This is particularly useful for midwifery students in 2nd & 3rd years when you begin performing Vaginal examinations.

BYO crafts... Is there a craft you aren't finding time for? Maybe you need a body double! Bring along your materials and chat to like minded future midwives while you complete your crafts 🍷

Upcoming Events



From August 4th to October 31st we are donating blood, plasma or platelets to Australian Lifeblood. Saving lives 1 donation at a time.

To Join our team

- * Download the Lifeblood App
 - * Register as a doner
- * Register to our Team - ACU Brisbane Midwifery Society
 - * Take the Eligibility quiz
 - * Book your donation
 - * Donate
- * Enjoy the post-donation snacks
 - * Prizes up for grabs



Have any questions - Email us -
midwiferysociety.brisbane@myacu.edu.au



Upcoming Events

BLAST TO THE PAST



DATE: 8TH OF AUGUST

TIME: 6:30PM

LOCATION: LORD ALFRED HOTEL, BRISBANE CITY

DRESS CODE: 80'S DISCO

COST: \$30 FOR STUDENTS, \$35 FOR NON-STUDENTS

DEETS: 2 DRINKS TICKETS & FOOD INCLUDED. **PURCHASE THROUGH LINK IN BIO**

BLAST TO THE PAST PARTY!

Kick off semester 2 with a blast! Join MCASA for a night of dreamy dancing, delicious drinks and fantastic food.

BUY TICKETS HERE

<https://tr.ee/zbKtnWfsDE>

BLOSSOM & BLOOM BALL

Run, don't walk to buy tickets! We can promise they will sell-out fast.

We can't wait to celebrate wrapping up 2025 with you.

BUY TICKETS HERE

<https://tr.ee/QHt7n6Qrg9>

MCASA INVITES YOU TO

Blossom & Bloom

CELEBRATE WRAPPING UP 2025 WITH US

NOVEMBER

SATURDAY **08** AT 6:30PM

2025

THE ROSE ROOM - CLOUDLAND, FORTITUDE VALLEY

TICKETS ON ACU LIFE

Connect with us



Website:

aculife.acu.edu.au/BRISMidSoc

Here you can:

- ~ Sign up to be a member of BMS
- ~ Find and RSVP to upcoming events

Facebook:

Brisbane Midwifery Society ACU

Instagram:

brisbane_midwifery_society_acu

Email:

midwiferysociety.brisbane@myacu.edu.
au

If you have an idea for an article , an achievement to share or a story to tell for our next newsletter, we would love to hear from you.

Send us an email today.



Do you want to...

Learn Leadership skills,
Make a positive change,
Add some extra skills to your
CV and have some fun along
the way.

We are seeking students from
1st and 2nd years to join the
executive team as shadow
executives to help lead our
society in 2026.

Workload required is approx 1-
2 hours per week shared
between us.

Email us, drop us a DM or let us
know you are interested in
person at our next event.

Join the Brisbane Midwifery Society



\$10 - 1 year membership
\$25 - 3 year membership
\$15 - Alumni membership

Free or discounted access to
courses and events Midsoc
Newsletter
Giveaways