

# NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth

## Shared Understanding for Collaboration

Version 1.8 December 2019



## Formal Name

“Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth”

## Abbreviated name:

“Stillbirth CRE”

## Preferred logo:



## Website:

[www.stillbirthcre.org.au](http://www.stillbirthcre.org.au)

## Contact details:

### *Postal address*

Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth  
Room 356 / Level 3 / Aubigny Place  
Mater Research Institute-University of Queensland  
Raymond Terrace  
South Brisbane Qld 4101

### *Phone / email*

Stillbirth CRE Coordinating Office  
07 3163 2463  
[stillbirthcre@mater.uq.edu.au](mailto:stillbirthcre@mater.uq.edu.au)



## 1. Introduction

The [Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth \(Stillbirth CRE\)](#) has been established to tackle the problem of stillbirth in Australia. Specifically, the Stillbirth CRE recognises that stillbirth has enormous economic and psychosocial impacts; that there has been virtually no reduction in rates for over 20 years; that large equity gaps exist; and that families whose child is stillbirth often receive suboptimal care. The Stillbirth CRE has grown from the work of the [Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand \(PSANZ\)](#) and the strong partnership between the Stillbirth CRE and PSANZ will ensure optimal outcomes. The CRE program is based on [The Lancet 2016 Ending Preventable Stillbirths](#) call to action, and the specific priorities identified for Australia. As many conditions leading to stillbirth and also interventions to prevent stillbirth may also lead to adverse outcomes for mothers and newborns, the CRE will also incorporate relevant outcomes for mothers and newborns. The Stillbirth CRE is a collaboration of parents, parent advocates, clinicians, researchers, professional colleges, and policy makers, to generate new knowledge that translates into practice change and improved outcomes.

Inclusivity and collaboration are at the heart of the Stillbirth CRE. We aim to engage all who share the CRE vision to create a strong and unified voice for stillbirth action in Australia. We are committed to ensuring that the voices of parents who have experienced the tragedy of stillbirth are heard and that avenues exist for parents to participate in guiding the activities of the CRE through its steering committee and various working groups. Structures for effective and meaningful parent engagement in all aspects of the CRE will be facilitated partnerships with parent support and advocacy organisations including [Stillbirth Foundation Australia](#), [Sands](#), [Bears of Hope](#), [Australian College of Midwives \(ACM\)](#), [Still Aware](#), [Red Nose](#), [Remembering Riley](#) and [Women's Healthcare Australasia](#).

As a regional office of the [International Stillbirth Alliance \(ISA\)](#), the Stillbirth CRE will promote and facilitate partnerships to enhance the work of the CRE and to ensure our work in Australia contributes to the global call to action for stillbirths and also newborn health as outlined in the [Every Newborn Action Plan](#). Further, the CRE will work towards building a strong health and medical workforce to ensure sustained improvement in care and outcomes for future families. For further information on the Stillbirth CRE people and program of work please refer to our website: [www.stillbirthcre.org.au](http://www.stillbirthcre.org.au).

The Stillbirth CRE is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council through the Mater Research Institute-University of Queensland.

## 2. Purpose of this document

A cohesive national collaboration is key to reduce the burden of stillbirth in Australia. This document details the shared understanding and commitment required from all parties involved in the Stillbirth CRE to ensure success.

## 3. Vision

Our vision is that stillbirth rates will be reduced to at least equal the best performing country globally and that supportive, respectful care will be provided to all families who experience the tragedy of stillbirth.

## 4. Mission

To create strong partnerships for high quality research and increased public awareness around stillbirth that translates into better care and outcomes for women and families.

## 5. Our ethos and values

- Woman and family centred; the health and wellbeing of families is kept at the centre of all we do through listening to and engaging with parents from the beginning of all projects within the CRE program
- Sharing and learning; recognising the role of innovation and learning from experience, we believe sharing of information and understanding should be automatic.
- Fairness and equality; everyone has something to give and should be given a fair chance to reach their potential. The most excluded should be supported to contribute in a meaningful way.
- Building trust; people succeed where they work together for a common good. Trusting one another to act with integrity and commitment demands compassion, honesty, transparency and respect.

## 6. Objectives of the Stillbirth CRE

The Stillbirth CRE will systematically address the Lancet 2016 series on Ending Preventable Stillbirths call to action and the specific priorities identified for Australia across the following areas:

*Addressing priorities across four major program areas:*

1. Improving care and outcomes for women with risk factors for stillbirth.
2. Developing new approaches for identifying women at increased risk of stillbirth.

3. Implementing best practice in care after stillbirth and in subsequent pregnancies.
4. Improving knowledge of causes and contributors to stillbirth.

#### *Raising public awareness:*

The Stillbirth CRE aims to increase understanding and prevention awareness in the community through a national public awareness program.

#### *Building the health and medical workforce:*

Stillbirth CRE pathways provide students and future leaders unique opportunities to interact and work closely with senior researchers and clinicians nationally and internationally while forming new collaborations across a range of government and community organisations.

#### *Building collaborations:*

The CRE is a virtual centre made up of partner organisations sharing a common vision. A strong national collaboration with a unified voice for stillbirth action across Australia is the only means by which we can effectively address stillbirth. Strong links internationally through ISA will serve to ensure a high quality program which contributes to reducing the global burden of stillbirths.

## 7. Expectations of collaborators and partners

A number of opportunities exist for collaboration with the CRE and these may be at an organisational or individual level. Any individual or organisation may collaborate with the CRE through participation on one or more subcommittees, working groups or advisory groups. In addition, organisations which make a substantial contribution to address one or more CRE priorities are acknowledged as partner organisations. This status provides additional opportunities to be engaged in the national agenda of the CRE.

#### *Expectations of CRE collaborators (organisations and individuals):*

- Support the ethos and values of the CRE
- Contribute to CRE priorities as part of the annual work program
- As a member of CRE, be an active participant and attend at least 60% of meetings
- Complete agreed activities and tasks for the CRE according to agreed time lines
- Adhere to all CRE policies and procedures (including those around authorship, data sharing, and marketing)

For CRE partner organisations, detailed guiding principles need to be put in place.

## 8. The Stillbirth CRE Structure

CRE Executive oversee day-to-day function of the CRE. The CRE Steering Committee will provide advice to the Executive on all aspects of CRE program. Standing subcommittees, working and advisory groups will progress the work of the CRE.

## 9. Communication

The CRE aims to ensure open and effective communication, establishing and maintaining a transparent process and communication pathways, conflict resolution strategies, nurturing a “team-work” mentality. Each party is responsible for notifying the other about any actual or potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists where

- a person’s individual interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of his or her role or professional partnership obligations; or
- an organisation’s or institution’s interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of partnership obligations

All CRE collaborators will negotiate and cooperate with each other in good faith to resolve any disputes or conflicts that arise. If the parties cannot resolve a dispute or conflict of interest between them, then they will endeavour to have the matter mediated or arbitrated on terms mutually acceptable to each other. The CRE Executive will act as the final arbiter for unresolved disputes.

## 10. Conflicts of Interest

The obligation of all Stillbirth CRE collaborators to disclose interests continues throughout the period of collaboration. The overarching principle is that a collaborator must disclose an interest as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the interest or following a change in the nature or extent of the interest. A conflict of interest is defined as per the NHMRC Act by the following:

*“Interest means any pecuniary or other interest in relation to the matter being considered and includes shareholders, ownership, employment, being the past or future recipient of benefits in any form from another entity also having an interest in the matter being considered, as well as any known family, social, business, or other relationship, past present or future with owners, principals or agents of such other entity”.*

## 11. What will success look like?

A successful outcome of the Stillbirth CRE will be a reduction in stillbirth rates after 28 weeks ‘gestation and improved satisfaction with care and psychosocial outcomes for parents who have a

stillborn child. We will measure these outcomes across maternity hospitals in partnership with Women's Hospitals Australasia.

Process indicators of success include:

- Inter-institutional collaboration, and collaboration with industry, government agencies, and the general community;
- International and national collaboration and cooperative arrangements, including visits to overseas institutions and international conferences;
- External financial support, such as award of national competitive grants, funding from public/private sectors;
- Extent of overall impact and contribution to the public good and/or to the stillbirth field of research, by means of publications, developmental input into social, health, and/or economic policy, press coverage or other media, participation in public debate;
- Quality education and training through training of Higher Degree Research students, HDR completions, workshops and short courses for academic, clinical, and wider community groups;
- Peer recognition in terms of awards to members, invitations to present keynote addresses at major forums, election to learned societies and academies;
- Marketing awareness and promotion of Stillbirth CRE activities among academic, health, government and community sectors, social media and general media platforms, participation in related forums; and leadership, management and effectiveness of Stillbirth CRE processes.

## 12. Stillbirth CRE executive management team:

Vicki Flenady, Mater Research Institute-University of Queensland; David Ellwood, Griffith University; Philippa Middleton, South Australian Health and Medical Research Council; Jonathan Morris, The University of Sydney; Euan Wallace, Monash University; Leigh Brezler, Stillbirth Foundation Australia; Adrienne Gordon, The University of Sydney; Miranda Davies-Tuck, Hudson Institute of Medical Research.

# Stillbirth CRE Partners and Collaborators



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