



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

# WA Abortion Care Clinical Guidelines (March 2025)

## Summary of Evidence of Review and Informed Changes

Classification: Official

[health.wa.gov.au](https://health.wa.gov.au)

## Introduction

The intention of this document is to demonstrate to interested parties the collaboration and consultation undertaken to develop the Western Australian Abortion Care Clinical Guidelines 2025 (WA Guidelines 2025).

To follow is a chronologically focused Summary of Evidence of Review and that informed changes, as of 10 March 2025. The phases provide signposts to the development process for the WA Guidelines 2025, as adapted from the Queensland Clinical Guidelines: Termination of Pregnancy (version MN19.21-V9-R24).

## Initiation phase

On 27 March 2024, the Abortion Legislation Reform Act 2023 (WA) came into effect. The Reform Act repealed all provisions related to abortion within the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911 (WA) and created a new framework relating to abortion under Part 12 C of the Public Health Act 2016 (WA).

The Women and Newborn Health Service (WNHS), North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS) clinical, consumer and subject matter experts adapted the industry respected Queensland Clinical Guidelines and in March 2024, approached the Health Networks Directorate (HND), Clinical Excellence Division, WA Department of Health (the Department) to steward application to Queensland Health for a statewide licence, enabling all WA Health service entities to use the guidelines.

On 12 April 2024, the Acting Executive Director, WNHS approved the Summary of Evidence of Review and Informed Changes for the INTERIM Abortion Care Guidelines (INTERIM WA Guidelines 2024). See Appendix 1, Women's and Newborns Health Service, North Metropolitan Health Service Summary of Evidence.

Queensland Health granted an interim licence due to the significant use of content from the Queensland Clinical Guideline, Termination of pregnancy (version MN19.21-V9-R24) and the Department's request to complete the following before seeking a final licence from Queensland Health:

- the development of cultural consideration statements for Aboriginal people, and for those who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse.
- a consultation process to engage and consult with the abortion care sector providing care to people in WA.

On 24 April 2024, the WA Chief Health Officer approved publishing of the INTERIM WA Guidelines on the Department's 'Abortion' website. Noting,

- an interim licence was required as WA Health services needed rapid clinical guidelines to support implementation of a new framework relating to abortion under Part 12 C of the Public Health Act 2016.

WNHS continued to work closely with HND to finalise the adaptation.

## Interim Licence Development Phase

During the interim licence development phase granted by Queensland Health and approved by WA Chief Health Officer, the Department progressed two key changes to the INTERIM WA Guidelines:

1. Develop cultural consideration statements for Aboriginal people, and for people identifying as culturally and linguistically diverse.
2. Develop a *Draft for Consultation* version of the WA Abortion Care Clinical Guidelines to engage and consult with the abortion care sector providing care to people in WA within 12 months of the interim licence approval in February 2024 (<https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/Health-for/Abortion/Abortion-care-clinical-guidelines.pdf>).

### Cultural consideration

In May 2024, the HND undertook a consultation process for the development of a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) clients: Cultural considerations statement with the following members of the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia Inc. (ECCWA):

- Chief Executive Officer (outgoing and current)
- ECCWA Board members.

The outcome was a sector endorsed CaLD clients: Cultural considerations Statement being developed and included in the appendix of the Draft for Consultation version of the WA Guidelines.

Between July to October 2024, HND undertook a consultation process for the development of an Aboriginal clients: Cultural considerations statement with the following sector stakeholders:

- Manager, Aboriginal Health, WA Country Health Service (WACHS)
- Consultant Service Planning and Development, Aboriginal Health, WACHS
- Director, Aboriginal Health Strategy, South Metropolitan Health Service
- A/Director, Aboriginal Health, North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS)
- Manager, Aboriginal Health, NMHS
- Area Director, Aboriginal Health, Royal Perth Hospital, East Metropolitan Health Service (EMHS)
- AACCT Program Coordinator, Community and Population Services, EMHS
- Aboriginal Health Officer, Maternity, EMHS
- Aboriginal Liaison Grandmother, AHS Aboriginal Officers, Maternity, EMHS
- Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer, EMHS.

The outcome was a sector endorsed Aboriginal clients: Cultural considerations Statement being developed and included in the appendix of the Draft for Consultation version of the WA Guidelines.

## User consultation

In preparation for the online consultation, a targeted stakeholder list was compiled. The aim of the online consultation was to enable feedback directly from stakeholders who provide care to people requesting an abortion and have used, or intend to use, the WA Guidelines as part of their practice.

On 11 October 2024, stakeholders were informed of the upcoming online consultation opportunity and were asked to register their interest to participate. This resulted in confirmation of 112 stakeholders to invite for the targeted online consultation:

- WA Health and Health Service Providers, n = 63
- Non-Government Organisations (in either regional or metro locations), n = 24
- Aboriginal health/medical services, n = 4
- Culturally and linguistically diverse women's health services, n = 2
- Professional Colleges, n = 6
- Non-Government Organisations, n = 9
- Additional individual practitioner registrations from email notification, n = 4.

Between 13 September to 30 October 2024, prior to the online consultation, an engagement and approval process was completed to:

- release the online consultation.
- host the Draft for Consultation version of the INTERIM Guidelines on the WA Health website. Planning included with discussions with:
  - Deputy Chief Health Officer
  - Acting Communications Manager, Communications Directorate, Office of the Director General
  - Acting Assistant Director General (A/ADG), Clinical Excellence Division.

On 31 October 2024 a draft email (for noting only) was prepared on behalf the A/ADG to the Director General in relation to the upcoming online consultation on the INTERIM WA Guidelines as part of the approval process for the Director HND to open the online consultation.

Please note, guideline related feedback was not collected with the intention of informing changes to legislation, only clinical care.

Between 1 to 29 November 2024 the online consultation was conducted via a targeted email invitation and survey link sent to the 112 identified stakeholders. The online consultation survey was not made public and could only be accessed via the emailed link. The total number of individuals or organisations who participated in the consultation was n = 22.

## Final Draft Development Phase

From December 2024, all responses were collated in an 'Action and responses' Log. From December 2024 to February 2025, each individual item of feedback was reviewed with ongoing consultation for approval to action edits from appropriate stakeholders. Such as:

1. Aboriginal cultural components edits pertaining to the entire document, involved consultation with the WA DoH Aboriginal Public Health Directorate in December 2024.
2. Clinical components involved consultation with the following on 10 December 2024:
  - Dr Janet Hornbuckle, Women and Newborn Health Clinical Lead for Health Networks Directorate, and Medical Advisor, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office, Department of Health, and Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist, Head of Obstetrics, King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH)
  - Dr Ruth McCuaig, Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KEMH
  - Dr Sarah Smith, King Edward Memorial Hospital GP Liaison
  - Melinda Olive, Policy & Project Officer, Women's Health Strategy & Programs, WNHS, NMHS Abortion Care Working Group Secretariat
  - Karina Moore, acting Director, HND
  - Rachel Matthews, Principal Policy Officer, HND.
3. Legislative components involved a request to the Department's Legislative and Legal Services (LLS) team to review and respond to each area of feedback in relation to particularly:
  - Section 1 of the INTERIM WA Guidelines, including particularly table 7 on 'Non-compliance with the Act'
  - Section 3.1 in relation to consent and mandatory reporting
  - Feedback on the Scope of Practice Review.

On 21 January 2025, the Department's Communication and Media (Media) team finalised a review of the provided guidelines prior to the LLS team review.

On 13 February 2025, LLS advised the outcomes of reviewing the provided guidelines.

All edits requested by Media and LLS were incorporated, with an updated copy provided to Teresa Ballestas, Principal Medical Advisor, Medical and Regulatory Support, Office of the Chief Health Officer. This step was undertaken due to Dr Clare Huppatz, Deputy Chief Health Officer being on extended leave. Ms Ballestas was very involved in the work leading to the changes in the Public Health Act 2016 (WA).

On 14 February 2025, the Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration and Health Equity Impact Statement Declaration were approved by the HND acting Director.

On 27 February 2025, Queensland Health advised the Department of permission to use the Queensland Clinical Guideline for non-commercial purposes, noting an

acknowledgement of Queensland Health in WA's final Guidelines. This acknowledgement has been included.

## **Next Steps**

The WA Guidelines 2025 are now considered finalised and ready to commence a final review process via the Assistant Director General, Clinical Excellence Division, Chief Health Officer and, Director General. Approval will enable final presentation and endorsement for licencing from Queensland Health.

The approved, and Queensland Health licenced WA Guidelines 2025 will be published on the Department's Abortion webpage (<https://www.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Corp/Documents/Health-for/Abortion/Abortion-care-clinical-guidelines.pdf>).

## Appendix 1 – Women and Newborns Health Service, North Metropolitan Health Service Summary of Evidence.

For noting, the Summary of Evidence document below was cprovided by WNHS, NMHS, and demonstrates the various groups involved iin drafting the INTERIM WA Abortion Care Clinical Guidelines (2024) adapted from the Queensland Clinical Guideline, Termination of Pregnancy (version MN19.21-V9-R24) to commence the licencing process.

Draft Abortion Care Clinical Guideline  
(Adapted from Queensland Clinical Guidelines: Termination of Pregnancy)

Changes to Clinical Guideline Informed by:	Clinical Guideline Reviewed By:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WNHS Hospital Liaison GP</li> <li>• WNHS Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologists</li> <li>• Medical Co-Director Women's Health, Genetics, Mental Health</li> <li>• Nurse Co-Director, Women's Health, Genetics, Mental Health</li> <li>• Manager, Women's Health Strategy and Programs</li> <li>• Director of Allied Health</li> <li>• Director Safety and Quality</li> <li>• Manager Medico Legal Services</li> <li>• Policy and Project Officer Aboriginal Health</li> <li>• Pregnancy Choices and Abortion Care Clinic staff</li> <li>• WNHS Pregnancy Loss Service</li> <li>• WNHS Pastoral Care Service</li> </ul>	WNHS Abortion Care Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Co-Director, Women's Health, Genetics, Mental Health</li> <li>• Nurse Co-Director, Women's Health, Genetics, Mental Health</li> <li>• Coordinator of Nursing &amp; Midwifery Gynaecology &amp; Perioperative Services</li> <li>• Coordinator of Midwifery Obstetrics and Gynaecology</li> <li>• Clinical Lead (Consultant O&amp;G)</li> <li>• Hospital Liaison GP</li> <li>• Chief Sonographer</li> <li>• Medical Co-Director Gynaecology</li> <li>• Consumer Advisory Council Member</li> <li>• Director of Allied Health</li> <li>• Chief Pharmacist</li> <li>• WNHS Safety &amp; Quality Representative</li> <li>• Director Corporate Services</li> <li>• Manager, Women's Health Strategy &amp; Programs</li> <li>• Project Coordinator NMHS</li> <li>• Clinical Nurse PCACC</li> <li>• Public Relations Coordinator</li> <li>• Secretariat</li> <li>• Policy &amp; Project Officer, Women's Health Strategy &amp; Programs</li> </ul>
	Reviewed and endorsed by NMHS/WNHS Abortion Care Steering Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A/Executive Director, Women and Newborn Health Service</li> <li>• Medical Co-Director, Women's Health, Genetics, Mental Health</li> <li>• Nurse Co-Director, Women's Health, Genetics, Mental Health</li> <li>• Director Midwifery &amp; Nursing</li> <li>• Clinical Lead Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology</li> <li>• Nurse, Midwife Co-Director, Obstetrics and Gynaecology</li> <li>• Executive Director, Strategy &amp; Transformation, NMHS</li> <li>• Director, Clinical Planning, NMHS</li> <li>• Manager, Women's Health Strategy and Programs</li> <li>• Executive Director Procurement, Infrastructure and Contract Management</li> <li>• Director of Clinical Services</li> <li>• Public Relations Coordinator</li> <li>• Project Coordinator, Clinical Planning, NMHS</li> <li>• Policy &amp; Project Officer, Women's Health Strategy &amp; Programs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All medical information pertaining to abortion aligns to RANZCOGs Clinical Guidelines for Abortion Care, TGA and best practice research and guidelines, as detailed in the references.</li> <li>• All statutory information is in accordance with relevant Acts, Policies and Procedures and linked, and referenced appropriately.</li> <li>• All references were checked and updated to best practice and latest information from the Queensland references.</li> <li>• The social considerations of the guidelines will need state-wide engagement, and the most appropriate state-wide resources for Aboriginal and CaLD populations included. This was work that was unable to be completed in the tight timeframe, prior to the legislation change.</li> </ul>	



The Draft Abortion Care Clinical Guidelines were endorsed by the NMHS/WNHS Abortion Care Steering Committee in March 2024 after being informed by the stakeholders above. The draft guidelines were then sent to Health Networks, with the intention of Health Networks holding the licence with Queensland Health, and making the clinical guidelines available for use state-wide, to provide the required clinical guidance on the legislative abortion changes, as well as for the purpose of trial and engagement.

The guidelines have been adapted from Queensland Health's Clinical Guidelines (Termination of Pregnancy) for use in Western Australia. It is acknowledged that the guideline is in draft form, and this should be clearly reflected in the document.

Following the publishing of the draft to provide immediate guidance to clinicians, the final version will be submitted back to Queensland Health for final licencing and will be published and available state-wide as the WA Department of Health's Abortion Care Clinical Guideline.

Sign Off



Date **12 April 2024**

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Dr George Eskander  
**A/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**WOMEN AND NEWBORN HEALTH SERVICE**  
**(Chair of WNHS/NMHS Abortion Care Steering Committee)**