

35TH ANNUAL HOMEBIRTH AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE



DAY 1

Saturday 18th November 2023



TANI PAXTON

'Carbon Zero Babies'

Inspired by observing midwives working with birthing women in Bali, this research explores the meanings associated with environmental waste at birth. The aim was to better understand how and why the homebirth community of women and midwives, choose to manage waste generated during the birthing process.

A scoping literature review showed this topic was unexplored. Ethical clearance was granted, and women and midwives were recruited for interviews conducted on Zoom. The participants were required to have planned or attended a homebirth in the previous five years. Having a midwife at birth was not necessary for the study. Participants shared stories of sustainable practices, rural living, and traditional crafting to meet their equipment needs and experiences with modern technology that enhanced or hindered birth preparations. The interviews were transcribed, and data analysed with common themes clearly linking both the women and the midwives' perceptions of waste at homebirth.

Women often have a spiritual connection to their land and their babies' birth. I found challenges the homebirth community experienced in accessing and disposing of resources for birth are faced with curiosity and creativity. Birthing at home has a low environmental impact as clinical waste is negligible. This research demonstrates a need to incorporate sustainable waste management into midwifery education while being respectful of midwifery practices when in the privacy of a woman's home.

Tani's presentation will take place at 10:50am on Saturday the 18th of November