

20073-281-018

WELLINGTON HOME BIRTH ASSOCIATION

P O Box 19-011
WELLINGTON

20 June 1986

It was great to meet up with so many of you at Conference, and many thanks to Manawatu for organising it so well.

Some branches expressed interest in our branch's Constitution. It is probably one of the broadest possible in legal terms! We enclose a copy for you.

Also enclosed is a copy of the two press releases Madeleine Gooda got into the Dominion and Evening Post relating to Conference and the domiciliary midwives' pay issue.

Susan Moustafa

Midwives ready to negotiate pay rise

Domiciliary midwives have turned to their last resort in getting higher pay from the Health Department.

A negotiating committee was set up at the national home birth conference over the weekend.

Midwives say it will take a viable case for a benefit increase to the Health Minister, Michael Bassett.

Currently there was no satisfactory form of negotiation available to them, according to Wellington domiciliary midwife Jenny Johnston.

Midwives' income was in the form of a benefit from the department, and peaked at \$11,700 per annum, Wellington Home Birth Association member Madeleine Gooda said.

She said the low pay meant women in Northland and New Plymouth could not opt for home births as those areas had no domiciliary midwife — a legal requirement at a home birth.

Dunedin women "faced trouble," and in 1983 Wellington was without a domiciliary midwife.

They had received a 7.5% benefit increase from the department last year, having requested a 100% boost, Ms Gooda said.

That request had been in response to the Labour Government's policy of making home births an option for New Zealand women, she said.

The six-member committee was formed as a last resort for higher benefits, she said.

The conference saw 1986 as a year of recognition for domiciliary midwives, not only as providers of primary health care to women, but as health professionals receiving relevant remuneration.

Home birth midwives aim for pay rise

By ANN HOWARTH

HOME BIRTH midwives are fed up with being paid about half the wage of hospital midwives and will be pushing for a reasonable income, Wellington domiciliary midwife Jenny Johnston says.

Domiciliary (home birth) midwives are paid under a health benefit scheme which limits their annual income to about \$12,000 a year before tax.

The National Home Birth Conference held in Palmerston North at the weekend decided to set up a wage negotiating committee on behalf of domiciliary midwives.

Ms Johnston said the committee would present the midwives' case for a benefit increase to Health Minister Michael Bassett.

She said the midwives — about 25 spread throughout the country — had had problems negotiating any rises because the benefit was a form of contract with Dr Bassett.

Domiciliary midwives did not mind being paid under a benefit scheme, but believed a form of parity with their hospital counterparts was warranted.

Ms Johnston said a domiciliary midwife was paid about \$180 for each home birth — which included three home visits before the birth, the labour and birth, and 12 visits after the birth. About 60 births a year was considered the maximum full-time work load.

She said the poor pay meant there were many areas in New Zealand where a home birth was not an option available to women because there was no midwife available.

Spokeswoman for the Wellington Home Birth group, Madeleine Gooda, said the negotiating committee was seen as the only option left for domiciliary midwives.

THE DOMINION, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4 1986 5 |

Brenda, Sharon
& all - Great to
see you at conference
Cheers - Susan & Madeleine