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Dem 23.4.81.

Alternative birth centre

AN ALTERNATIVE birth centre may be set up in Newtown thanks to the Wellington Hospital Board.

The board has offered to rent 38 Owen Street to alternative birth group Birth and Beyond.

Spokesman Miss Joan Skinner said yesterday the group wanted to give women an alternative to hospital and home births.

They had been looking for a centre where women could give birth with their families in a homely atmosphere and return home after 24 hours. The proposed centre would also provide antenatal

classes, postnatal care and support for parents.

They had asked the board for a property and it looked as if the Newtown house would be suitable, Miss Skinner said.

The house had five bedrooms, two or three were suitable for birth rooms and there was enough room for classes and discussion groups.

"It has a nice, sunny homely atmosphere with a lovely big garden and it only needs a bit of plumbing work to make it suitable," she said.

The group had not signed a lease but members hoped

to get started, she said.

Board chief executive officer Mr J Rennie said the house would not be available until October.

It was being used as a transit house for employees who had just moved to Wellington.

The board and group would meet later this year to discuss lease details including rent and tenure.

Birth and Beyond hoped for a peppercorn rental, Miss Skinner said.

It had received \$12,000 from the Mental Health Foundation last year. This would be two year's salary

for a birth centre co-ordinator.

As funds were a major problem, applications for grants had been made to the Todd Trust, Sutherland Trust and the Committee on Women.

Miss Skinner said the group had a core committee of eight people and had been working for a year to establish a centre.

"We're not anti-hospital or anti-home birth but we think there is a need for another choice between these two. Some women are not happy with either," Miss Skinner said.

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Birth centre still no nearer reality

10/10/81

Birth and Beyond still does not know if it can use 38 Owen Street in Newtown as a birth-and-resource centre.

The organisation, made up of parents and professionals, aims to provide a home setting for women giving birth.

The Wellington City Council, convened as the town planning hearings committee yesterday, reheard the organisation's application, and then decided to debate the matter in private.

Its recommendation will be presented in the public part of next Wednesday's meeting when the same 19 councillors will debate the matter openly.

The whole council reheard the matter because last month it overturned a decision of the town planning commissioner, who declined the first application.

Councillors yesterday

were concerned about such things as patients arriving at the centre in the middle of the night, specially as no one would live in the house.

They were told by midwife Mrs Pamela Skelton that a 24-hour telephone service would operate to ensure that someone would be at the house when the expectant mother arrived.

She told the council only 50 to 75 births were expected at the centre each year, although that side of the operation would not get under way for some time as, initially, the organisation

would set up the resource centre.

The law would allow only one birth at the centre at a time, and this then raised a series of questions from councillors as to what would happen if two people arrived at the same time.

It was explained that women would have to book in, and only three bookings a fortnight would be taken.

If complications set in during a birth, arrangements would be made to have the woman transferred to the hospital.

There were no objections to the proposed use.

RIXEN MOVE?

The workers' occupation of the Rixen clothing factory in Levin will be discussed at the Federation of Labour's regular fortnightly executive meeting on Monday.

The 42 sacked workers have sat in at the more the part

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