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Maternity row reply

Part
7.8.81

A Karori woman who a few days ago described giving birth in Wellington Women's Hospital as one of the worst experiences of her life has had a letter of explanation from the medical superintendent, Mr Dick Laurensen.

In the letter, delivered today, Mr Laurensen said he was sorry that she had not enjoyed her stay and said that steps had been taken to try to reduce noise at the hospital.

His letter said: "I am sorry indeed that you did not find your stay in Wellington

Women's Hospital a fulfilling experience, which is what we would wish it to be."

Mr Laurensen said the problem of noise was a constant concern "but we are very restricted in what we can do about it."

"I think the problem results from the frequent visiting and recently we introduced a new rule to restrict the number of people who can visit, apart from the fathers.

"However, we are under constant pressure from the majority of women to have relaxed rules of visiting. Unfortunately visitors and rest

do not go well together."

He said that because the woman's own delivery was normal she was not given priority for a single room.

"The small number of single rooms are allocated on a priority basis. Priority is given to those who have some complication, those who have caesarian sections and those who elect to have rooming in of the baby.

"During the 48 hours, July 10 to July 12, there were 28 deliveries and, as a result, the staff were unable to meet your request for a single room.

"I am sorry that it was not possible to accede to

your request but hope that you will accept that it was done on the basis of reasonable application of a reasonably fair policy," Mr Laurensen said.

The woman said she thought the letter was a fair one but disagreed that the policy of distributing single rooms was reasonable for women who had normal births.

She said it should not be up to luck. More single rooms could be available to all mothers, just for the first 24 hours, if women with complications were moved out of single rooms once their condition improved.

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