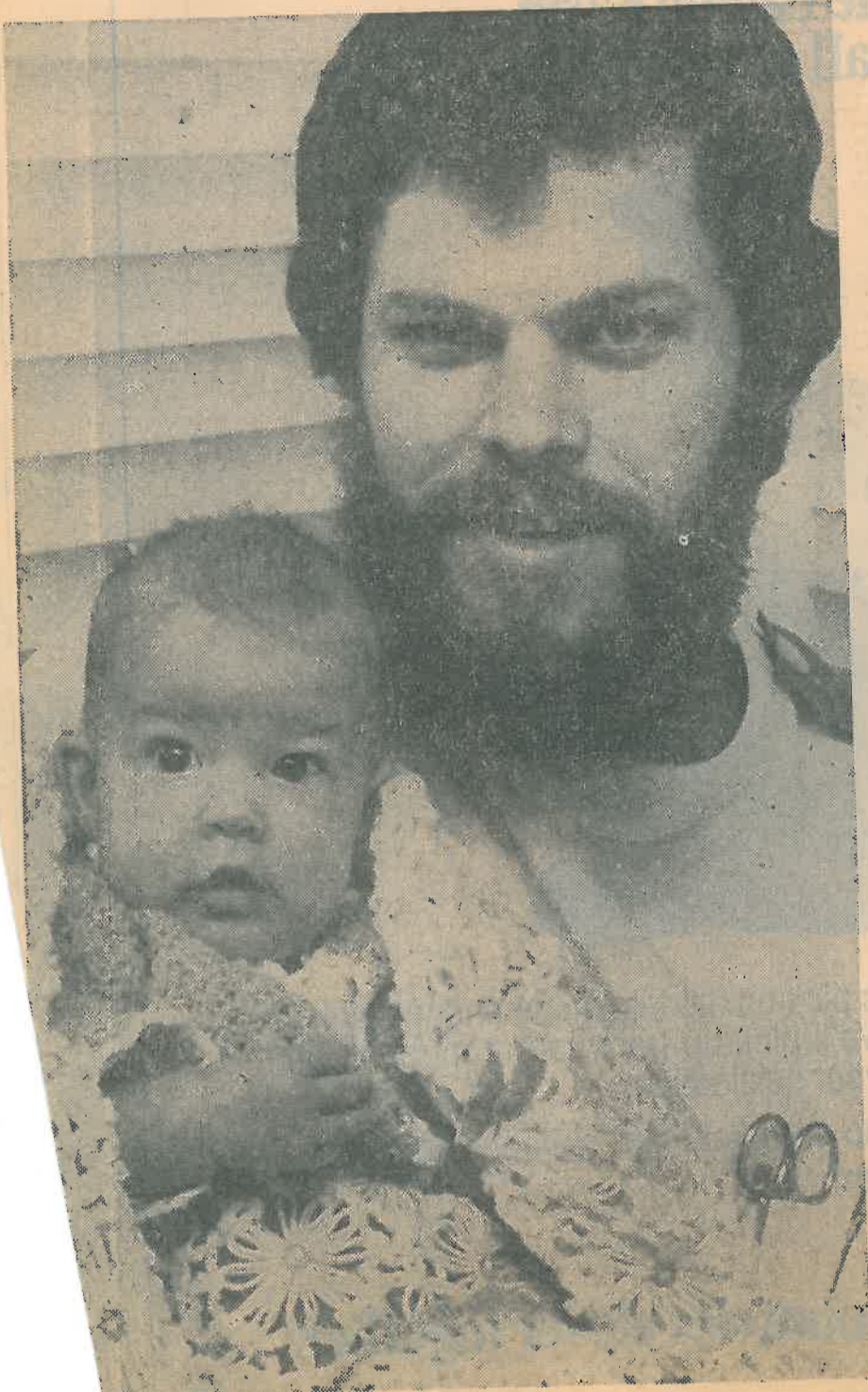


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Male nurse Geoff McGrath wants to be a midwife. . . . Birth fascinates him, he says.

The 24-year-old Green Lane Hospital "sister" pictured with four-month-old Sara Powell says he has the right qualifications to be registered for midwifery.

Yet replies from the Nursing Council of New Zealand to his applications have left him confused and bewildered.

"It hasn't answered my request — it hasn't said 'yes' or 'no.'"

An Australian, Mr McGrath first applied to the council last year.

In its reply a few months later, the council said: "Unfortunately legislation in this country does not allow us to register men as midwives."

The council said it hoped to reverse the situation when the Nurses' Act was rewritten.

Early this month, Mr McGrath reapplied, after confirming new legislation had been passed.

He had also seen a Star story about the first male nurses to take maternity training.

But the council reply, he said, was "negative." It sent a form outlining changes in nurses' titles under the Nurses' Act, 1977.

A nurse for 5½ years, Mr McGrath graduated in obstetrics in Sydney. His ambition is to be a matron.

"In Australia, males have been working in midwifery for at least seven years," he said.

He delivered more than 30 babies at Sydney's Crown St Women's Hospital.

Nurses' Society national president Mr David Willis said there were no reasons why male nurses could not be registered as midwives now.

And chairman of the Nursing Council Miss Ann Nightingale said about 20 male nurses were sitting examinations this week to qualify for midwifery training.

The only hold-up was gazetting the new regulations, which had been delayed since January, she said.

Mr McGrath said: "Males seem to have green light. I'm confused about the hold-up in case."

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