

20073-23-041

The New Zealand Home Birth Association

*Also letter to
National Childbirth
Trust & request for M. Ten's address.*

The New Zealand Home Birth Association,
P.O. Box 7033, Wellesley St., Auckland, 1.

Affiliated with NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for PARENTS and
PROFESSIONALS for SAFE ALTERNATIVE CHILDBIRTH, U.S.A.

Ms Sheila Kitzinger,
The Manor,
Standlake,
Oxon,
UNITED KINGDOM.

2nd August 1981.

Dear Ms Kitzinger,

I would like to say how much our members enjoy 'The Experience of Childbirth' and 'Birth at Home'. Your books are very popular here.

We are concerned in New Zealand about the U.K. House of Commons Second Report from the Social Services Committee Session 1979-80 on Perinatal and Neonatal Mortality, volume 3, 1980.

At present a Maternity Services Committee of the Board of Health in N.Z. is looking into place of birth. Its membership is heavily biased in favour of base hospitals for delivery and care. We understand they have adopted the part of the U.K. report which refers to mortality based on place of birth (p. 23 and 27). The situation in N.Z. is quite different. We have statistics now for 1,000 home births and of these only 3 died, two with congenital defects that precluded life. Of course these are only planned and domiciliary midwife and usually G.P. attended births. We do not include figures for unplanned, accidental or precipitate births not booked for home birth with registered midwives.

I wonder if you have any information which could help us to discredit this U.K. Report. I can find no definition of home birth in the Report. It appears to include all births outside hospital.

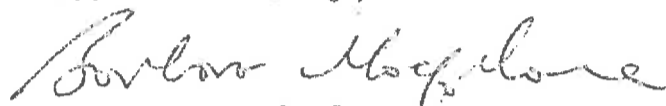
We are seriously concerned that an attempt will be made to dissolve the State funded home birth system which has existed here for a long time, given the largely British and Dutch nature of immigrants to

New Zealand.

The movement towards home birth here has flourished. We began with two or three domiciliary midwives in 1974 and now have over fifteen. There are also a growing number of G.P.'s who will 'cover' for a home birth (carry out checks and attend) but the O and G's are completely opposed and very vocal in their opposition.

I hope you can refer us to something which may make our Committee of the Board of Health reassess the statistics in the U.K. Report.

Yours sincerely,



Barbara Macfarlane

Secretary.