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This term as President of the New Zealand Home Birth Association has been quite different to my previous term in 1982/83. The issues have been different and I have not been so isolated in my responsibility.

I have seen my role this year as being centred on internal issues, rather than as National Spokesperson. This is for two reasons, firstly the internal divisions have erupted. This has been a positive thing as it had been festering for some time and we are all now involved in looking at ourselves and asking 'What do we want of a National Organisation?' Ideas are being worked out, discussed and reworked on a local level and I am hopeful the divisions will be resolved at conference.

The second reason is that Home Birth does not seem to be as controversial or sensational as it has been in the past. Could it be that it is almost becoming accepted? Apart from a short burst prior to the elections when the Domiciliary Midwives increase in remuneration was announced by Aussie Malcolm there has been limited opportunity to be newsworthy nationally. I am confident that local issues are being well publicised locally.

On the political front I have been disappointed that we still have to work just as hard to convince a labour government that Domiciliary Midwives should not starve. Is it time for a change in tactics? Perhaps we should concentrate on increasing public awareness so that the public bring about change instead of a minority pressure group.

On the organisational front I have felt thrilled with the work that Henriette, Angela and Lois have put in this year. They have been innovative and resourceful. It frustrates and saddens me when I hear and read that these workers are not necessary because they are part of a 'bureaucracy' or that groups do not want to pay levys to support their work. Somehow the work these officeholders do is meant to 'happen' because we all agree it should. In spite of the fact that The NZHBA is an incorporated society much lobbying, communication and donkey work has gone on. Thank you Henriette, Angela and Lois and the groups that have supported you. A geographically separate executive does work and has the advantage of involving groups from throughout the country.

Thanks also to all those people who have supported me in my term as President.

*Marilyn Walker*