

20073-291-119



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

19 January 1988

The Secretary  
Auckland Home Birth  
Association  
PO Box 7093  
AUCKLAND

Dear Ms Emerson

Thank you for your letter of 25 October 1987 in which you express concern about midwifery education.

No doubt you have read the recent joint statement I made with the Ministers of Education and Women's Affairs. This announces that planning is underway to introduce separate midwifery courses in 1989. These will be in addition to options within a limited number of Advanced Diploma in Nursing courses. A planning group has been set up, comprising health, education, service and interest group representation to advise on the implementation of the policy. The comments that you have forwarded will be made available to the planning group.

Your comments about the effects of pursuing a dual option have been noted. No doubt you will acknowledge that it is desirable to monitor the effectiveness of each of the options, in order to gauge their respective effectiveness. This will be done as midwives graduate from the courses which begin in 1989.

It is my hope that midwives and other interested groups will be pleased that progress is being made to resolve issues of midwifery training, and that they will work in harmony with the programme developers to achieve a soundly based midwifery workforce for New Zealand.

For your information I have attached a copy of the press statement.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'David Caygill'.

David Caygill  
Minister of Health

7 December 1987

HON DAVID CAYGILL Minister of Health  
HON DAVID LANGE Minister of Education  
HON HELEN CLARK Acting Minister of Women's Affairs

Changes to Midwife Training

Changes to midwife training have been agreed to by the Ministers of Health, Education and Women's Affairs.

In a joint statement today, the ministers said that moves to give prospective midwives a dual training option would be introduced in 1989.

Planning for these changes is now underway, they said.

From 1989, according to the ministers, midwifery education will be available separately from the Advanced Diploma in Nursing.

"This move will give prospective midwives another training option," the Ministers said.

"Because courses will no longer be tied to the Advanced Diploma in Nursing, they will be able to be made available in a greater number of centres. This will mean they'll be more accessible for those who wish to undertake this training."

"The reintroduction of a specialist midwifery course acknowledges the importance we attach to this particular area of health care," said the Ministers.

"We should emphasise that the midwifery option will continue to be available in a limited number of Advanced Diploma in Nursing courses, and the ADN will continue to be open to practising midwives who wish to seek further qualification."

"We hope that this choice of options will attract more applicants for training. We consider it a matter of priority to ensure that a greater number of midwives graduate," the Ministers said.

The Ministers also announced the phasing out of "bridging courses" for psychiatric and psychopaedic nurses. The specialist training needs in these areas of nursing care are to be met instead by short courses designed to provide specific skills demanded by the profession.

"Rather than having to go through extended training at a basic level, registered nurses will now be able to undertake post-basic training in their chosen area of specialisation," said the Ministers.

**FURTHER ENQUIRIES :**

**Susan Wauchop**

**Press Secretary ext 8132**

25 October 1987

Hon. David Caygill,  
Minister of Health,  
Parliament Buildings,  
WELLINGTON.

Dear Mr Caygill:

We, the Auckland Home Birth Association, wish to express our concern about the current state of midwifery education in New Zealand. Without adequately trained midwives the home birth option, which is supported by the Labour Government, is not possible in the long term.

The present midwifery education, as an option within the Advanced Diploma of Nursing (ADN) is NOT adequate. The recent Evaluation of Advanced Diploma in Nursing Courses (1987) published by the Department of Education verified this opinion. It points out that both the clinical and theoretical content are inadequate and, also by compressing a basic and an advanced course within one 40-week period it does justice to neither.

Since 1980, the year after the last midwifery class graduated from St Helens, Auckland, the National Midwives Section have put and had passed three remits (1980, 1982 and 1985) calling for a separate midwifery education. As directives from these N.Z.N.A. Annual Conferences, this is therefore N.Z.N.A. policy.

We are asking you to support and fund separate midwifery education, leaving the ADN for those nurses/midwives who wish to obtain an advanced (management/administrative, teaching, research, statistics) diploma.

We understand that one of the options being suggested and favoured is a dual one, i.e. a separate course while still retaining the midwifery option within the ADN. We feel that such dual funding is definitely not cost effective and would also undermine a separate course. Who is going to enrol in a separate course when they can obtain two diplomas for the price of one?

We support the Midwives Section in their petition for the separate midwifery training as the only option.

We ask you to give your urgent attention to this crucial issue.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholette Emerson,  
Secretary.

25 October 1987

Hon David Lange,  
Minister of Education,  
Parliament Buildings,  
WELLINGTON

Dear Mr Lange:

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We support the Midwives Section in their petition for the separate midwifery training as the only option.

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Yours sincerely,

Nicholette Emerson  
Secretary.