

Aotearoa Midwifery Project

*Welcome to the Aotearoa Midwifery Project's end of year newsletter
December 2020*

A word from the Chair and Chief Executive

At its November meeting, the Council was excited to receive an update from the Collaborative Reference Group about the progress of the scope of practice material. The work of this group, to guide the development of a future midwifery regulatory framework that will be approved by the Council, is progressing well. Te Tatau o te Whare Kahu, the Midwifery Council looks forward to a further update before it embarks on the first consultation phase.

The Council is legally required to define the scope of practice, and to set the standards of clinical and cultural competence and ethical conduct required of midwives and standards that pre-registration programmes of midwifery education must meet in order to be accredited. The [Aotearoa Midwifery Project](#) is a key area of work that the Council believes will enable a culturally safe and effective workforce to better meet the diverse needs of Aotearoa whanau and maternity services over the next decade.

For midwives the outputs of this project will form the basis around which their practice is measured and assessed as they enter the register and also how they will demonstrate their ongoing competence to practise.

As we reach the end of 2020, the Council would like to thank everyone involved in this project for their commitment and hard work this year.

Christina Mallon, Chair and Dr Sue Calvert, Chief Executive and Registrar

A word from the Co-chairs

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangataha maha o te motu, tēnei te mihi aroha ki a koutou i tēnei wā o te urutā. Ko te tūmanako kia tau te mauri ki waenga i a koutou i ngā hapori katoa. He karere anō tēnei tuhinga kia mōhio ai koutou i ngā whakahaere i tēnei wā.

2020 is a year in which many would say has presented us all with unprecedented challenges. As Co-chairs, we are proud to reflect on the work the [Collaborative Reference Group](#), how we have worked together on reviewing and incrementally developing a future midwifery regulatory framework beginning with the scope of practice statement.

Members of the Group have been building their understanding about working in a Te Tiriti partnership framework to enable equal decision making for Māori while making sure that the views and interests of consumers are heard. We believe a genuine Te Tiriti-led regulatory partnership is vital as we move forward.

In November we welcomed Paraone Tai Tin as a new member to the group. He is a father, teacher, educator and cultural advisor. Paraone has already proved himself to be a valuable contributor - we are excited that he brings a unique Tane perspective.

In closing, we would like to thank members of the Collaborative Reference Group for their ongoing commitment, broad expertise, and willingness to be open, listen and learn from each other. We are looking forward to resuming our work and sharing the projects direction of travel in the new year.

Dr Judith McAra Couper and Dr Hope Tupara, Co-chairs, Aotearoa Midwifery Collaborative Reference Group

Meet members of the Collaborative Reference Group

Going forward we intend to profile two members of the Collaborative Reference Group in each edition of the Project newsletter. A key function of the group is to expertly guide the Council's review of the regulatory framework specific to midwifery practice in Aotearoa. We are very pleased to introduce Heather Muriwai and Talei Cummins.

Heather Muriwai, Maori Representative

Heather (Tangahoe/Ngāti Ruanui) is the Clinical Lead Advisor, Māori Midwifery at Counties Manukau Health (CM Health). Her role encompasses the recruitment and retention of a Māori midwifery workforce, and the inclusion of strategies to achieve equity for Tangata Whenua across all areas of Women's Health. This has included a Māori Health presence in the Child Protection Service multi-disciplinary team forum who have the responsibility of the assignation, or not, of health alerts being placed on referred babies and children. She strives to ensure that decisions are equitable, fair and just. Heather has been a strong advocate for the reviewing of all Oranga Tamariki processes within CM Health. This has resulted in ongoing work between CM Health, Auckland DHB and Waitemata DHB management, Oranga Tamariki regional management, and NZ Police regional senior management.

Heather began her midwifery career 23 years ago as a homebirth midwife caring for Māori across the Tainui, Te Arawa and Hauraki rohe. She moved to Tamaki Makaurau in 2008 to be a member of a Kaupapa Māori Midwifery team based at Turuki Health Care in Mangere, before moving onto CM Health in 2016 initially as the Programme Coordinator of Te Rito Ora, the community breastfeeding support service. She commenced her current role in July 2019. She is a member of both the Women's Health and Midwifery Governance Groups, Maternity Quality & Safety Group, SUDI Governance Group and Midwifery Education Forum at CM Health. Heather is passionate about improving both the experience and outcomes for whānau across the women's health spectrum by ensuring strategies, policies, processes and actions have an equity focus for Māori.

At a national level, Heather is a member of the DHB Midwifery Leaders Group, New Zealand College of Midwives Education Team and Hāpai Te Hauora Expert Advisory Group.

In May 2020 she was appointed to the Collaborative Reference Group. Heather describes this as one of the most important pieces of work that she has been involved in as it is being led in a Te Tiriti process that reflects both Māori and Pākehā partners' world views. She believes as Tangata Whenua, Māori midwives and whānau will be visible for the first time in a future scope of practice.

Talei Cummins, Pasifika Representative

I am a Clinical Educator, and part of the Pasifika Team at AUT. I also work as a staff midwife at Waterford Birth Centre in Hamilton. I am Co-Chair of Pasifika Midwives Aotearoa (PMWA) and a Pasifika Representative on the NZCOM National Board. I am passionate about growing our Pasifika midwifery workforce and reducing inequities in health and education.

My role as the Pasifika Representative in the Collaborative Reference Group allows me to contribute to policy affecting Pasifika and other minority groups. Pacific peoples in Aotearoa, including women, midwives and midwifery students, have unique lived realities and needs. My positionality and roles within Pasifika, midwifery and educational communities puts me in a privileged place to relate to these.

I chose to be involved with the Aotearoa Midwifery Project as it is important that decisions affecting our Pacific population aren't made in our absence. As a Pasifika midwife, my worldview is very different from that of other members of the group. Having a place in the group allows me to be a part of work that will affect Pacific peoples.

The work to date has taken place via zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions and the geographical spread of the large group. One of the great things that has happened is Collaborative Reference Group members have become more familiar and learned a lot from each other since the start of the project. I look forward to being able to eventually meet kanohi ki te kanohi. The work in the group is progressing well, and I have appreciated being part of the Te Tiriti process with a large group of midwives and consumers working together. Although the meetings have been time consuming, the sense of the importance of is very evident. I feel privileged to be involved in the project.

A word from the Project Team

2020, the Year of the Midwife and a leap year, has been heavily defined by the Covid-19 pandemic as has the work of the project. Along with the Co-chairs, Emily, Karen, Leigh and I are pleased to have met many of you over the course of our work with the Collaborative Reference Group.

Our engagement phase was delayed in the earlier stages of the project as we were aware of the Covid-19 environment and the requirement on midwives and the health system to prioritise effort and resources to the pandemic response. Over the last four months we have had at least 25 engagement opportunities with midwifery groups across the sector. Many meetings have taken place via zoom, with several local kanohi ki te kanohi meetings.

The focus has been about connecting with midwives, outlining the purpose of the project, describing why a future regulatory framework is timely, the project processes that are supporting how we are working and discussion about issues to consider for the future framework. Many sessions have taken place in collaboration with MERAS and the New Zealand College of Midwives' national office and regional groups. We have had many positive meetings and learnt lots from our conversations.

In the new year we are looking forward to many other opportunities to build new relationships.

For 2021, we are actively seeking opportunities to meet with more groups across the sector, so please get in contact if you would like us to be part of your next hui, fono or meeting.

I also encourage getting in touch with me if there are any queries or you or your organisation would like to discuss opportunities to engage with the project.

Nga mihi o te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou,

Nga manaakitanga,

[Karina Kwai](#), Project Manager