Midwifery Board
Robyn Dempsey
to:
nras.review
08/10/2014 06:00 PM
Hide Details
From: "Robyn Dempsey" <midwiferobyn@optusnet.com.au>
To: <nras.review@health.vic.gov.au>,
History: This message has been replied to.

1 Attachment

image001.png

The Australian Society of Independent Midwives

8th October 2014

RE: National Registration and Accreditation scheme review

Dear Mr Snowball,

It has come to the attention of The Australian Society of Independent Midwives (ASIM), that the National Registration and Accreditation scheme is currently under review.
As a group that represents the interests of midwives working in private practice, we would like to take this opportunity to express our support for a separate Midwifery Board, rather than the current combined entity, which does not suit the needs of the midwife.

Midwifery is a specialized area, and a midwife is able to be a professional in his/her own right. Therefore, a governing board, specifically for midwives would not only oversee the specialized concerns of midwifery, but support the profession as a whole. This would have a flow on effect of enhancing the protection of the birthing woman – as the midwife would have services and a network that is specifically designed to support the needs of the professional midwife.

There are major concerns with the current arrangement of a combined board. These are:

- From the perspective of the midwife in private practice (PPM), we know that many of these individuals across the country have had complaints made against their practice to the NMBDA. These complaints are often dealt with in a seemingly unfair manner, with the midwife being judged by other health professionals, who do not have a midwifery focus. Midwives have had restrictions placed on their practice without investigation, and investigations have been taking an extraordinary amount of time to complete. This leaves the midwife often without income and without the ability to apply for employment due to the restrictions placed on his/her registration.
ASIM is concerned, that with complaints not being processed in a timely manner, the safety of the public is at risk. Women left without an experienced midwife are often choosing to birth without a professional, rather than move into the system. We feel that a separate midwifery board would ease this burden of investigation, and streamline the process.

- Any health professional with investigations pending should be judged by peers. Private midwifery is a unique part of practice, and a separate midwifery board would ensure that there is understanding of the role of the midwife in the continuity of care model.

- ASIM is concerned that the current NMBA has a lack of contemporary practicing midwives or consumers with recent maternity experience who can safely judge the practice of midwives.

- We also feel that there is a lack of equity in the representation of midwives in comparison to nurses.

- As there is a lack of understanding about the midwifery profession, ASIM feels that there is limited understanding of the role of the midwife in Australia and therefore an inability to facilitate innovative health services.

- It is interesting to note, that a separate Midwifery Board would have 35,000 registrants. This would provide an adequate workload given the complexities of midwifery practice and the challenges associated with effectively addressing contemporary midwifery issues.

- ASIM is also concerned that currently there are four individuals on the board who have a midwifery qualification, however, current legislation does not require members of the Board to have any currency in midwifery practice. Therefore the current structure does not provide a capacity for the Board to make judgements about contemporary midwifery practice in a manner that protects the public, or improves access to health services for women.

- ASIM sees midwifery as a wellness model of care. This is very different to Nursing, where a different set of skills is required. Currently the Universities have recognised this difference by offering midwifery as a separate Bachelor degree, rather than one combined with nursing.

ASIM believes that a new board, which is able to focus solely on Midwifery as a profession in its own right, would not only benefit the midwifery population, but enhance public safety, and public access to qualified, competent, professional Midwives.

Yours Sincerely,

Robyn Dempsey
On Behalf of The Australian Society of Independent Midwives.