



NZ COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES_(INC)

Media Release

Thursday 15 November 2012

Official Opening of NZ College of Midwives Christchurch National Office

Around 160 invited guests will next week attend the official reopening of the newly built New Zealand College of Midwives' head office on its original site in central Christchurch.

The College is one of the first organisations in the city to have completely rebuilt and moved back into the central city following the 2011 February earthquake.

NZCOM CEO Karen Guilliland says the official opening will be an opportunity to show off the new two storey building which is very different to the single story 100-year old brick villa the College for several years.

"We are delighted to be 'home' again in the centre of Christchurch and we are proud of what we have achieved in the relatively short time since February last year," she says.

After damage from the September earthquake, the College was planning to repair the historic villa but Ms Guilliland says the February quake and subsequent aftershocks forced it to rethink.

"Repair and restoration was our first choice but as we looked at the costings it became clear we couldn't make that work. We are a not-for-profit membership funded organisation and don't have unlimited resources. We consulted our national committee who decided to rebuild, and importantly took a very firm decision to support Christchurch by keeping our national office here. We are very pleased with the result, which is a national office designed for the next century," she says.

The new building houses the College, its sister organisation, the Midwifery and Maternity Provider Organisation (MMPO - which provides management and practice support for self-employed midwives), and also clinic rooms for Christchurch midwives and mothers. The building has been constructed to the highest specifications for earthquake resistance. Clinics have been held at a nearby motel for the last 18 months.

Appropriately, UNDP Director Helen Clark, the Minister of Health who championed midwifery autonomy in 1990, has sent words of congratulations which will be read at the opening. Ms Clark says,

"Midwives and women are often noted for their fortitude under pressure. Their determination to support Christchurch in its rebuild to provide midwifery services for women and their babies, and a strong and reliable office base for the College, is commendable".

Dame Sylvia Cartwright, currently in Cambodia engaged in the Khmer Rouge trials, has also sent her personal congratulations, expressing regret that she is unable to attend. Dame Sylvia says,

“It would have been a great honour for me to support what the College of Midwives has achieved particularly in Christchurch but also in your day to day work which is so vital for New Zealand women. I am disappointed as I admire so much of what you did for the women of Christchurch and the spirit that drove rebuilding against enormous obstacles”.

Karen Guilliland says it is important to have a celebration around opening the new building rather than a formal unveiling, and everyone with an interest in midwifery and community health services has been invited.

“There’s a variety of speakers to share the occasion with us, and newly elected College President Sue Lennox will preside over the event,” she says.

www.midwife.org.nz

Additional:

The opening is on Wednesday 21 November and will comment at 1pm with a mihi (led by Nga Maia’s Amber Clark and College Kaumatua Mina Timutimu) at the front entrance of the building at 376 Manchester Street (between Bealey Ave and Edgeware Road). This will be followed by short speeches and the official ribbon will be cut at around 1.25pm by and then guests will be invited into the building by College elders Mina Timutimu and Sue Bree, where light refreshments will be served. The event will conclude at 2.15pm.

If you would like to attend, please contact Ali Jones on 0272473112.