



NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES (INC)

Tuesday 7th Sept 2010

Dear National Committee and College members,

Re Earthquake in Christchurch.

It was so great to hear about the highly successful conference. The feedback from lots of sources tells me it was inspiring at many levels. I want to say a huge thank you to all of you and the wonderful College staff who did such a great job when having to also deal with the considerable stress of not being with their families when the earthquake struck here in Christchurch. Everyone here has been affected in some way at home and some have considerable damage to contend with but no-one was hurt and everything is ultimately fixable.

This memo is in relation to the consequences for the College of the civil emergency here. The center of town is still cordoned off and many businesses closed. Having the army on each street corner in the centre of the city, whilst it looks like a war zone, is also reassuring. Some staff are having difficulty getting to work because of damaged roads. The post office with all our mail is condemned and this means mail is erratic and there may be delays in responding. The College computers have been down but the server was restored yesterday so we can take emails but please can you advise members to contact us only if urgent for the next week at least. Just to add to this are the ongoing nature of the after shocks which under ordinary circumstances we would classify as an earthquake. These are expected to go on for another week and with the intensity of the ones we had last night new damage is being reported today.

The College building held up pretty well considering its 100 year old age and there was little serious internal damage to furniture and fittings. We now also have power and water restored and the toilets are working so far but we do expect some issues with sewage in this area. We are still boiling the water. However the actual building has suffered some damage from the quake. The chimney has gone and there are some rather large structural cracks to the front of the building. This has meant the cancellation of all clinics until further notice. Some LMCs and some advisors have offered their services to Christchurch Women's hospital as they cope with the extra births resulting from stress and two birthing units closed from damage to their buildings.

It has also meant we will have to relocate some of the offices at least until we can get a structural engineer to sign the building off as safe. As you can imagine the waiting list for an engineer is huge so this may take time. Currently we are planning to house the admin staff in the seminar room as this is the new part of the building but this will take some IT planning and added networking. Some Midwifery advisors and Ali Jones will work from

home. The legal department is also likely to work from home. Carla's cell phone is the contact point for midwives needing urgent legal advice only; otherwise please advise members to leave a message and these will be attended to ASAP.

My message to you all is that we have limited capacity here but we are dealing with the urgent or pressing membership issues and national MOH and other government agency work as and when possible. We would be very grateful if you could convey to members that unless urgent could they please not contact the College this week. I will update you at the end of the week with progress we have made in re-establishing a full service. We also appreciate well wishing emails but it is not possible to answer these all so could you pass on our appreciation. Could you circulate this email as widely as possible for us?

The MMPO is also affected and there is some structural damage to their building so their staff are also working under duress and with limited infrastructure. They have, and will, ensure pays go through but it would be helpful if MMPO members also only contacted the MMPO offices with urgent matters.

Very many thanks for your patience in this extraordinary time.
Kind regards

Karen

Karen Guilliland
CEO