



28 April 2009

## Media Release

### **The 18<sup>th</sup> International Day of the Midwife**

Every year midwives around the world use the International Day of the Midwife to globally recognise the essential nature of the midwife's role in maternity care that provides quality healthcare to women and their babies.

The 18<sup>th</sup> International Day of the Midwife will be celebrated on Tuesday 5 May 2009. This year's theme "The World Needs Midwives Now More than ever" has been developed as part of the World Health Organisations Millennium Development Goals in response to the overwhelming evidence that midwives are the key workforce in the drive to improve outcomes for mothers and babies. This year's theme specifically links to the goal to the ability of midwives to significantly reduce mother and baby mortality.

New Zealand College of Midwives CEO Karen Guilliland says "New Zealand is fortunate to have a strong maternity system with a one on one, twenty four hour maternity service from pregnancy test to six weeks post partum. This service involves the whole family in focusing on the woman and baby's needs at a very personal level. Over 85% of New Zealand women choose a midwife as their lead maternity carer and where the LMC is a doctor there will also be a midwife involved in every birth in every birth setting". Karen adds "the latest reports from the Ministry of Health indicate that New Zealand is also one of the only countries in the world to achieve the same excellent outcomes for both rich and poor mothers and babies."

The International Day of the Midwife will be celebrated by women and midwives around the country as they come together to take action to highlight the knowledge, skills and professionalism of midwives and the contribution they make to the health of their nations.

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