



Editorial

This first issue of *Birthspirit Midwifery Journal* brings to reality a dream of the last 12 years - a journal reflecting the grassroots of midwifery practice and women's childbearing experiences.

This is a forum where empirical knowledge – that gained from being embedded in everyday practice - is valued as highly as that gained from structured research. Sara Wickham's article on developing cervical wisdom, and Lorna Davies' discussion on waterbirth following previous Caesarean section, focus on the empirical; Suzanne Miller's article on the effect that place of birth has on the midwife's practice provides an example of knowledge gathered from structured research, as does my historical account of waterbirth in New Zealand. Equally valued also are the contributions to midwifery understanding that consumers provide, such as Ruth Hungerford's reflections on creating a 'new' family story of birthing and Trudy Hart's passion for ensuring immediate and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact from birth.

Not only are the joys, triumphs and revelations of both autonomous practice and childbearing celebrated in this publication; the difficulties and challenges of keeping midwifery 'normal' also receive attention. This journal, therefore, marks a coming of age of midwifery in New Zealand, a maturity evident when we welcome critique of midwifery practices which unnecessarily interrupt the continuum of healthy pregnancy, physiological birth and attached mothering, as exemplified in a midwifery story on the use of 'natural' remedies to hasten physiological labour. When we 'listen' to some student midwife experiences, as in a poem by Sheena Lee and a reflection by Sarah Pallett, we have the opportunity to consider how we can better support students in a way that will not abrade their senses of self as midwives and women. Sue Lennox's article offers a lead to understanding our own individual role in conflicts that may arise in practice that can, if left unresolved, impact negatively on maternity professionals and the women we attend.

So, as you read those contributions mentioned above, and others in this issue which are not singled out, I wish you fruitful reading, thinking, debating, practice and birthing.

Yours in midwifery

Maggie Banks
Editor