Terms of Reference
Aotearoa Midwifery Collaborative
Reference Group

Purpose
The purpose of the Aotearoa Midwifery Project is to steer an evidence-based review of the Midwifery Council of New Zealand’s (the Council) scope of practice statement for midwives, competencies for entry to the register and pre-registration standards for education. Key inclusions include the April 2019 amendments to the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act 2003 and the diverse needs wahine, their pepi and whanau within contemporary New Zealand.

Background
It is widely recognised that midwifery practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand is changing. While midwives are the main health professional caring for wahine during pregnancy, labour and birth, the scope of their role has increasingly needed to adapt to the more complex medical, psychological and social needs of the many wahine for whom midwives provide care on a day to day basis. Advances in technology have also had implications to practice.

The Council is charged with protecting the public by ensuring that midwives are fit and competent to practise their profession. The functions of the Council are set out in section 118 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 https://www.midwiferycouncil.health.nz/about-us/legislation and recognises the Te Tiriti of Waitangi as the founding document of New Zealand. It has a responsibility to ensure that standards and competencies are and remain current. Leading the review on the role and scope of practice of the future Aotearoa/New Zealand midwife and setting the necessary standards of clinical competence is one of the Council’s key 2020 strategic objectives.

Te Tiriti of Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi or the Treaty) encapsulates the relationship between the Crown and Iwi. Key future elements to the revised regulatory framework will include a strong focus to improve equitable health outcomes for Maori and Pasifika women together with wahine who experience disability and maternal mental health.

Recent Global Work
Substantial bodies of work have considered the contemporary and future role of midwives alongside the scope of midwifery with improving outcomes for wahine and their pepi across systems of care as a key focus.

In 2019 the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) published the Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice providing a framework for competence in practice. Internationally, regulators in the UK have undertaken an extensive review of competency standards of competence while both Australia and the UK have completed a review of their standards for programmes of education.


The Lancet Series (Renfrew et al 2014) has published evidence of the role of the midwife and the scope of midwifery practice in enhancing care and outcomes for childbearing wahine. The result of this research is the development of a framework for the provision of quality maternity care with a significant proportion of care attributed to midwives.

Systematic reviews (Sandall et al, 2017) also demonstrate having a continuity of care model of practice with a known midwife consistently enhances positive outcomes for women.
New Zealand has a midwifery-led continuity of care model. The changes to the HPCAA necessitate work to ensure that midwives are and remain competent to work collaboratively with individual wahine in ways that are culturally responsive across an interdisciplinary system of care.

Role of the Aotearoa Midwifery Collaborative Reference Group

The key function of the Aotearoa Midwifery Collaborative Reference Group is to expertly guide the Council’s review of the regulatory framework specific to midwifery practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand by enabling ways of working together to achieve a point of difference that includes:

- providing midwifery counsel that focuses on improved outcomes for wahine, their pepi and whanau
- contributing information, ideas and networks to support the successful implementation of the Aotearoa Midwifery project
- guiding the development of revised amendments to the midwifery regulatory framework and implications for recertification and preregistration education for the midwifery profession across the next 5 - 10-years

Membership

Established in March 2020, the Aotearoa Midwifery Collaborative Reference Group is made up of diverse partners from across the midwifery profession’s system of care together with consumers Maori, Pasifika and stakeholders.

The membership includes independent co-chairs plus representatives from professional bodies x2, district health boards x1, educational institution x1, consumer groups x2, Maori x1, Pasifika x1 and a midwife in clinical practice x1.

The Council’s secretariat welcomes all applications which will be reviewed, before short-listed for the Council’s consideration. Membership is approved by the Council.

Responsibilities

Reference group members commit to:

- Guiding work deliverables across each stage of the Aotearoa Midwifery Project
- Ensuring project activities align with the Council’s Strategic outcomes framework
- Guiding the development and implementation of a revised regulatory framework
- Promoting effective communication and collaboration among all key stakeholders and networks
- Guide a framework to ensure monitoring and evaluation is in place for competencies and pre-registration requirements
- Guiding the design of evaluation criteria for the project
- Attend 90% of scheduled meetings, unless discussed and agreed with the Chair. Delegation of meeting attendance is not permitted.
- Preparing for meetings by reading material in advance to be well versed and able to contribute in discussions
- Presenting information representative of their groups
- Respecting confidentiality, if required, of matters from meetings
- Sharing information and outcomes to networks from meetings where possible

Member’s skill set

- Excellent communication
- Willingness to work collaboratively and share expertise
- Innovative, strategic, high level thinking and decision making
- Actively contribute to policy which reduce inequalities and minimise the impact of disability
• Ability to analyse complex information, collate views and develop advice for concise reports
• An understanding of:
  o The HPCA Act 2003
  o Te Tiriti of Waitangi
  o Recently published international and national literature
  o The current and future needs of midwives in NZ
  o Government Health Policy

Working principles
• A commitment to the work of the Council, believing in its purpose and functions
• Positive working relationships with others
• Respect and appreciation of the contribution of all members
• Encouragement towards different opinions and perspectives
• Flexibility and willingness to consider new information and complex issues
• Willingness to consider new information and contribute to solving problems
• Conflict of Interest register will be updated at each meeting

Quorum
The quorum for meetings is six reference group members plus two Council staff members

Frequency of meetings
Meetings will be held monthly, either face-to-face in Wellington (unless there is benefit in holding the meeting at an alternative venue), by teleconference or zoom videoconference. Meeting dates will be arranged for the calendar year, taking into consideration commitments of members and the Council’s meeting schedule.

Working group(s)
The Reference Group may establish a working group for specifically focused pieces of work. Membership for these groups can be recruited from outside of the Reference Group.
The Reference Group will:
- determine membership
- establish aims
- agree timeline, clearly define a process for to achieve the group’s outcomes and reporting requirements