

Kia ora koutou katoa,

This year has been the third year that the reviewers as a group have collated our Feedback via Survey Monkey, a process that seems to work quite well for a group of very busy people.

Before I move into the report proper, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge those reviewers who have left our group this year. Over the year we have seen the departure of consumer reviewers Sarah Jane Holton and Charlie Saunders – both of whom gave many years of service to the Auckland region. We have also seen the departure of Beatrice Leatham, Anne Spratt and Arnia Rupa – again, reviewers who have dedicated much wisdom and time to the team.

Whilst we cannot expect reviewers to stay reviewers forever, this is an opportune moment to reflect on a key theme from this year. As a group of reviewers, comprised of only seven consumers and now only nine midwife reviewers, we have, at times, felt very stretched over the year. This has been particularly the case over the busy months of March and April, where a combination of APC renewals and large numbers of MFYPs mean a large number of reviews. Some of us were called upon to do upwards of 5-6 reviews in a one month period, and reviewers from outside the Auckland region were called in to assist. This is certainly well above the average of one per month and moving forward it is not something that we wish to see repeated. We will certainly need a better system in place in 2020 to cover this time period, and we would like to see more MFYP reviewers trained.

At this point it is important to acknowledge that the Auckland regional committee Chairs heeded our call for more reviewers this year, and created an advertising campaign to recruit more reviewers, both consumers and midwives. We, along with the regional committee eagerly await the NZCOM ratification process and training of these new recruits so that they may be properly acquainted with the region and the role before the crunch time March/April 2020.

In terms of how long our current crop of reviewers have been reviewing for, most have been reviewing for a period of between 4-5 years, and almost all of the reviewers surveyed indicated that they are very happy to stay on. This is pleasing as the (presumed) new cohort of reviewers will have a good group of reviewers to turn to for informal mentoring.

Reviewers continue to be grateful to serve the Auckland midwifery community, however we would like to highlight two issues of concern, aside from the number of reviewers. Auckland as a community is getting increasingly congested, something we all experience. This is causing unique challenges for our consumer reviewers, who for the most part, have children. Being able to commute to the review location and obtain childcare is a source of frustration given that we are spending increasing amounts of our time travelling without compensation for this given compensation is calculated based on mileage not time spent in a vehicle. Secondly, there are mixed views amongst reviewers about midwifery material arriving late. Whilst we all understand that life can 'get in the way' we have seen an increasing number of midwives literally doorstep us days before the review to hand deliver material to us. This is something we highly discourage and would like to stress to the

midwife community that it is our preference that review material arrive on time, via tracked post or courier so that we can give midwives the reviews they deserve and need.

We note that at the recent Education Day there was conversation about whether or not reviewers should be allowed to continue reviewing past a service period of five years. There are mixed views in our region on this, with many acknowledging that for smaller regions there would indeed be a benefit in freshening the review team up. Indeed, some in our own region feel this would be beneficial. However, the prevailing mood, amongst the consumer reviewers at least, is that this would not work for the Auckland region. As consumer reviewers we note that it takes, for the most part, 2-3 years before we feel fully 'familiar' with all the quirks of such a large and diverse population that covers three distinctly different DHBs and the full spectrum of midwifery care and roles. We acknowledge that this time frame is clearly shorter for midwife, them of course having a 'head start' on midwifery knowledge and culture. We would also like to note that with the struggles to retain reviewers, in particular so that they have served enough time to become MFYP reviewers, an arbitrary time frame would unnecessarily remove relevant and valuable experience from the consumer team.

As with last year we note that there continues to be an increase in midwives reflecting on Turanga Kaupapa, which is pleasing. However there are still a significant number who do not. However, the reviewers, as a group, acknowledge that without adequate support for the midwives, via training opportunities, then this will continue to be sporadic. We would also like to add that it has been a number of years since reviewers were able to attend a Turanga Kaupapa workshop and would like to see this happen as soon as possible.

The First Year of Practice material continues to be exemplary, with both mentors and mentees making the best of the support they receive over this year. However we have noticed an increasing number of graduates being placed in unsupportive and stressful situations, largely as a result of staff shortages. Most cope with this remarkably well, however we are concerned as this could gradually erode their desire to stay in the profession.

There is an obvious difference in terms of demands and mood between hospital and case loading midwives. For the former, there are concerns around acuity and short staffing – although this is slightly better than last year. For case loading midwives we have noticed continuing concerns around sustainability – of note the demands that women place on midwives – as well as calls for pay equity. Overwhelmingly the reviewers acknowledge that midwives are tired, however in spite of this there are high levels of collegial support.

It is important to acknowledge the support structures that are in place for us as reviewers. The reviewers as a team would not be able to do the jobs we do without the unfailing support and dedication of Delia in the Auckland office and Saili in Christchurch, and while we all would like to see more opportunities for mentoring and guidance amongst our team, we acknowledge that without these two women we would truly be lost.

Finally, we would like to thank the midwives for your continued support these last twelve months. We have had the absolute privilege to share many tears, laughs, sighs, frustrations

and victories with many of you. We have sat as supportive witnesses as you have told us of the amazing things you do almost every day. We too have felt exasperated as many things fall through the cracks in our health systems. But, overwhelmingly, we have been amazed by the ways in which almost all of you work from the heart and keep the partnership alive in your practice, no matter how diverse they are. You are all amazing, and you so often leave us almost speechless. Thank you for allowing us to walk with you for part of your journey.

Prepare by Eileen Joy on behalf of the Auckland reviewer team.