**Wellness Committee**

**Canterbury / West Coast Region New Zealand College of Midwives**

**Annual Report for Annual General Meeting August 6th 2019**

The Wellness Committee has had a change in membership since the last Annual General Meeting in 2018. Kate Nicoll has left the committee as she has a new role and felt it was more appropriate for her not to continue her current involvement. The committee has welcomed Barbara Weir, Mary Campbell and Sammie Adams to join Rebecca Harris, Ange Hewitt and Rose Barker as members.

The Wellness Committee has had an unusually busy time since the start of 2019.

Prior to this we had mainly been involved in giving support and gifts to Midwives following unexpected events or bereavements. We had also had some discussion regarding the possibility of starting more proactive steps such as organising events / walks that would promote connection and “wellness”.

This had been generally quite straightforward to deal with and we were guided by our terms of reference and the regional budget. We have had occasional requests which have sat outside the realms of the Wellness Committee for a number of reasons, but this has also been fairly clear following group discussion about how to deal with these. Discussions with the midwives / student midwives concerned have been able to clarify this.

However this year, as you will all been aware, has seen an exceptional, tragic burden on the midwifery community in Christchurch with not only the Mosque Shootings, but also the tragic loss of three of our own treasured midwives, Gillian Hawksworth-Smith, Diana Bates and Tai Dixon.

As you will all know this has left the midwifery community, particularly the teams at Christchurch Women’s Hospital (CWH), completely shocked. For CWH, which is usually busy and understaffed and a stressful environment, this has been a massive increased stress and hard for many staff to deal with.

Following an extra meeting of the committee with Violet Clapham (Regional Chair) and Davina Geddes (Vice-Chair) we decided that the staff at CWH desperately needed as much support as the Canterbury/West Coast Region was able to give. Although we have had a budget planned we all felt that as the region has significant regional funds it was reasonable to spend some extra money on support to CWH. At that point we did not put a cap on the amount we could spend as due to the urgency and shock that everyone was feeling it was uncertain what we could offers and what would be most useful. The regional support has included providing a number of ‘comfort/care” items for Birth Suite and CWH, which have been things like tea/coffee, various food items, rescue remedy, hand cream. Feedback has been that this has been appreciated; particularly the food and tea/coffee and we plan to do another range of items to restock in the near future. We have all felt that it wasn’t appropriate for the region to have relatively large amounts of money sitting in the bank while staff were feeling so traumatised and desperate.

The situation at CWH also raised questions about who we support and although the “criteria” has generally been to support regional members of NZCOM we have included some other members of staff with gifts and acknowledgements recently as this seemed appropriate given the circumstances and given their own personal situations.

We have provided some support to Diana’s family and in the process of working out what Tai’s family would like is to offer. Gillian’s husband had asked for privacy and the region made a donation to a cause that she had always been very keen to support.

The stressful circumstances also brought us a few other difficult or stressful situations which has happened in the past and raised some questions about how people heard about the Wellness Committee and how the committee heard about those needing support. We have put posters up at CHW and also at the primary units in Canterbury to let staff know what we do and how to contact the committee. This has included the suggestion that if anyone is planning an event to bring midwives / colleagues together they could approach the region to discuss funding available.

The Wellness Committee also discussed the idea of holding another picnic as we did in the years immediately following the earthquakes, which included food, coffee, bouncy castles and face painting. We are happy to organise this but need to work out a final plan and budget to bring to the region for approval.

Due to the unexpected work the Wellness Committee has experienced this year, and as two members have just been away overseas, we are yet to finalise some receipts, gifts and payments and will do this with the treasurer in time for the next business meeting. The amount that has been spent in the last year is yet to be finalised and we will report this at the regional NZCOM meeting next month. The delay is due to the unexpected busy time we have had and to members being away overseas recently.

Ange Hewitt

Barbara Wear

Mary Campbell

Rebecca Harris

Rose Barker

Sammie Adams

Canterbury / West Coast Wellness Committee