

**Workforce to profession: an exploration of New Zealand
Midwifery's professionalising strategies from 1986 to 2005**

By

Sally Pairman

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Certificate of authorship/originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me except where made explicit that a portfolio piece has been co-authored. Any help I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

Over the last twenty years New Zealand midwives have worked to reclaim their professional autonomy and scope of practice in order to promote a women-centred and midwife-led maternity service. In order to achieve these aims New Zealand midwifery engaged in several key professionalising strategies that have proved successful in developing midwifery as a recognised profession with a social mandate to provide autonomous midwifery care to women throughout pregnancy, labour, birth and the postnatal period. These strategies were integrated but can be defined separately as: partnership relationships with women; leadership through the professional organisation; education for midwifery autonomy, and self-regulation within midwifery professional frameworks.

Through an exploration of key midwifery professionalising strategies this doctorate identifies the unique characteristics and development of midwifery in New Zealand and critically reflects on the success and ongoing challenges of its integrated professionalising strategies.