

## **Myth busting and midwifery: the lived experience of providing remote rural maternity care in a changed maternity environment**

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The role of the rural general practitioner in maternity care has changed significantly since the 1990 Amendment to the Nurses Act and the initial iteration of Section 88 of the Public Health and Disability Act 2000. This presentation explores the lived experience of providing maternity care in a remote rural environment throughout this changed time, from my personal perspective of being a self-employed community based midwife in Wanaka, Central Otago.

The somewhat mythical notion of returning maternity care to a time where midwives worked under the supervision of general practitioners still persists, despite the working realities of both practitioners having changed. By discussing the shared commonalities, challenges and benefits of collaboration and mutual understanding in rural maternity care the myth that a return to the system of old as preferable may be busted.

The myth that rural midwives are adverse to medicine will also be busted by illustrating our education, recertification and scope creating modern health professionals rather than tea drinking sorcerers. From the realities of isolated pre-term birth to being stranded without reliable emergency services, to the increasing requirements of antenatal screening and managing practice within the referral guidelines, a picture will be drawn of what it is to be a rural midwife today. With this understanding we will then look to opportunities for enhancing rural maternity relationships and services now and in the future.