

## NEWS

### Professional midwifery doctorate a first

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Australia is now at the forefront of postgraduate education in midwifery and nursing with the launch by the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), of two professional doctorates in these fields – a world first.

This is the view of Professor Lesley Page, from Thames Valley University, UK, a leading midwifery scholar in Britain and Canada, who was speaking at the launch of the doctorates by the

newly renamed Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Health in early March.

Professor Jill White said the Faculty, of which she is head, was renamed to bring midwifery 'in from the cold'.

UTS is the first Australian university to make such a distinction between the professions in a deliberate attempt to give due recognition to the different skills, she said.

'Many of the nursing faculties in Australia have been subsumed into health sciences but ours is a totaling, enabling change which recognises different expertise involved,' Professor White said.

'The professional doctorate we are now offering requires the same level of scholarship and rigour as a PhD.'

Professor White said while PhD studies usually apprenticed students to be researchers, the midwifery doctorate was aimed at improving practical skills.

The faculty's name change followed concern in the profession that the name 'midwifery' was dying out, being most readily associated with home births in the public mind.

'We would play an inclusive role: this is not about setting up alternative services but really about professionals working with women to have the best possible child birth in whatever setting,' Professor White said.

- with AAP



Attending the launch of the doctorates were (from left) Professor Jill White, Dean, Professor Tony Blake, UTS Vice Chancellor, Frances Hughes, chief nursing officer of New Zealand, Dr Andrew Refshauge, NSW Health Minister, and Judith Meppem, chief nursing officer of NSW. Ms Hughes and Ms Meppem are both candidates in UTS's professional doctorate in nursing.

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