

15 April 2011

To whom it may concern

Please accept this submission. It is a day late however, I only received information on this yesterday. The current situation by which independent midwives are being processed if there has been a complaint against them is totally unacceptable, unfair, unjust and unethical. No conditions should be placed on any midwife before an investigation has taken place. I am expecting my 5th child. I have had two hospital births and two homebirths. I can say without any hesitation that the midwives that attended me at home were conscientious, woman-centred and extremely competent. They are not bound by the usual hospital protocols that so often lead to pressuring a birthing woman into time frames, accepting interventions and other interruptions to the birth process. In my experience, homebirth midwives are passionate about providing an excellent, caring, professional service tailored to fit the birthing woman's (and her partner/family) individual needs. This is crucial for the birthing woman, and so often doesn't happen in the hospital system through all of the constraints imposed.

Is it not bad enough that homebirth midwives must pay the exorbitant cost of Professional Indemnity Insurance? Due to this ridiculous expectation, most homebirth midwives find it impossible to continue their specialised and valuable practise. This appears to be a very convenient method to almost obliterate homebirthing in Australia.

I request that an urgent review of this process takes place immediately and that some balance be resorted. Midwifery and homebirth is not a crime, it is a choice for women like myself, who have healthy bodies, healthy pregnancies and the presence of mind not to just accept the standard medicalised version of birth that is deemed so "safe". Safe for whom?

Homebirth allows our bodies to birth naturally, without the interference of painkillers, associated, often damaging or lethal interventions, and unwanted strangers in the comfort of our familiar environment. It is unfair to take away our options and choices through the persecutory method of the current Complaints process. Karen Arthur