

Hi,

My name is Sarah Wilcox. I am writing in regards to the new laws affecting private homebirth midwives who will no longer be able to practice and ensure the safety of women and their babies as of July 30 next year.

I am 25, and currently pregnant with my second child, due in September. Last year, in May I gave birth to my son, Jasper James, comfortably, gently and safely AT HOME thanks to the experienced and wonderful support of 2 private midwives Nicola Dutton, and Jennie Teskey.

This was a decision I made based on a lot of research into the best birthing options for myself and my baby. It was expensive because homebirth is not publicly funded, but I strongly believe the money could not have been better spent.

We began our journey by contacting Nicola, who is part of a practice in Melbourne 'Midwives Naturally' when I was about 8 weeks pregnant. We met her at our house for our first appointment when I was 12 weeks. Immediately we felt a connection with her and felt confident that we were in great hands and this would be the beginning of a great relationship, which has now turned into friendship. When I was about 20 weeks we met our second midwife Jennie. I was overjoyed to be sharing this journey with 2 wonderful, wise midwives, and had no fears about the birth. The continuity of care was very important, and I knew they respected our birth wishes, and I was going to know who would be present at my son's birth, and they would be there the whole time, no shift changes, lunch or tea breaks, or strangers walking in on me in that most important, vulnerable, sacred time.

Jasper was born on May 20th 2008. He came into the world naturally, with no pain relief, intervention, or interference. There was no pressure to 'speed things up' when Jasper was taking his time. He came when he was ready, gently, and calmly. This shows in his personality, he is a very relaxed, content, alert, happy child. We bonded well straight away, and breastfeeding was a breeze. I was instilled with amazing confidence given by Nicola and Jennie, who encouraged and supported our parenting style. They visited over the next few days, and in the following weeks. It was a sad day when Jasper was 6 weeks old and this would be our last appointment. But our friendships have flowed on, and we regularly see Nic and Jennie, who will always be in our hearts and very special to Jasper.

I am so glad to now be sharing another journey with them, they are becoming like family to us. Although my heart is heavy with sadness in the knowledge that this may be our last together. I plan on having more children, but I worry, what will happen to them? What will their story be? Will I choose to birth at home with no care, and risk both my baby and myself? Or will I go to a hospital, where I am not comfortable, and have strangers attend my birth and feel they need to interfere due to hospital policies?

A woman should have the choice to birth where she feels comfortable. For some women that is hospital, others that may be a birthing centre, but for me, I feel most comfortable at home, under the care of midwives. Please don't take this choice away from me, and from all other women in Australia.

Please reconsider the policies that are about to be put into place. It will take away women's rights, and force wonderful midwives like Nicola Dutton and Jennie Teskey out of a job, and a livelihood. Not to mention endangering the lives of babies and their

mothers who chose to stay at home and go it alone, because, for whatever reason, they can not bring themselves to go to a hospital.

Thankyou  
Sarah Wilcox