

To whom it may concern,

This email was going to be very different.

That was before I had a miscarriage last weekend.

I WAS going to say that I was one of the lucky ones – I had fallen pregnant before the ‘cut-off’ of Sep 09, so I would have the opportunity to choose a homebirth with a midwife if all was well with my baby.

Just knowing I had the choice made me feel at ease. I wasn’t sure what this pregnancy would bring, but I had eagerly made an appointment with a wonderful midwife I know, in anticipation of discussing with her the possibility of undertaking my antenatal care, and attending the birth of our 3rd child.

The midwife we had for our 2nd child’s homebirth is moving to New Zealand, partly because of the lack of support she faces from our health system here in Australia, so I had written to this other midwife, saying “we are on the search for a beautiful midwife to help our family welcome this new child”.

Why was I anticipating my meeting with this midwife? Because I had such wonderful memories of my antenatal care and birth of my 2nd child, born at home in 2003. I was looking forward to the appointments, each one at least 2 hours long, where I could pour out my hopes and dreams, my fears and concerns, and have them acknowledged, addressed and understood. Each of these appointments enabled me to connect with the woman who would be attending me at the birth : the most vulnerable moments of my life – physically and emotionally. I wanted to know that when my body was opening up that I would feel safe medically, and emotionally – in opening up my body I was opening up my most raw self. The person present at the birth needed to know me in my regular state, so that I could focus in the birth on the job at hand...not on ‘getting to know’ someone I’d never met...not on befriending people to ensure my safety. That all had been taken care of in those wonderful monthly meetings. She needed to know me intimately, which was perfect for such an intimate event.

My 2nd birth had been such an amazing, beautiful experience for my whole family. My 1st child’s birth had been a largely unsupported, mismanaged affair at a major hospital in Sydney, resulting in an unplanned caesarean after 30 hours. The trauma of that birth had a ripple effect that impacted my life, and my family’s life, for years afterwards. The trauma was a result of being unheard, unacknowledged, unsupported, and scared out of my brain. What a contrast to my 2nd birth at home, where I felt beautiful, strong, supported, nurtured and vitally important.

And I had been looking forward to a similar experience with our 3rd baby.

But that’s all changed now.

Last Saturday I began to bleed, and I knew we were losing this little one, at only 6 weeks. My grief was of course initially for this baby that we will never meet. That the child we had spent the previous 2 weeks talking about and beginning to discuss the wonderful ways our lives would change, was not going to arrive. Ever. Our hearts were breaking. My two older children were sad and have asked many questions.

But now, I am devastated because of what this means for our family in another area. I have been advised to wait a minimum of three months before attempting to conceive again. I can feel that my body needs this, as I am still feeling the effects of this miscarriage, a full week after the event.

But that then means that any baby we conceive will be born after July 2010. And this brings up a whole new series of emotions. I don’t know if we would choose homebirth for this as-yet

unconceived child. That depends on what this baby needs and what I need. But to not have the option? That is indeed devastating.

I have been through this “closing-off of options” with my previous child, when wanting a vaginal birth after caesarean under the care of a known midwife. The medical literature supported my preference for a vaginal birth. The doors of the Birth Centre at Royal Brisbane Hospital were closed to me, citing a ‘previous caesarean’ as their reason I was excluded. The Birth Centre in Sydney, however, said they would accept me, if I lived there still. Being excluded was hard to take. All I wanted was a safe birth, with someone whom I trusted & had chosen in attendance...having already experienced the opposite of this with my first child’s birth.

So I chose a homebirth, as a way to get this care.

And it was amazing, magical, wonderful...the hardest thing I’ve ever done, and the greatest gift I could give my family – all of us, together, my daughter born in our home, surrounded by her besotted daddy, devoted two aunts, caring midwife & welcomed by an ecstatic mummy.

And now I may not have that as an option? This makes my miscarriage a double blow...not only is it the death of a dream, but perhaps also the death of the chance to introduce a child to our family in a gentle, peaceful, safe manner. I cannot bear the thought that this new legislation may take away my choice. That’s all I want – the choice. For me. For my family. For my future children. And for their future children. Just the choice.