

Marcus Deuchar

It has come to my attention that the Federal Government are considering making changes to the indemnity insurance cover of private midwives which will essentially render their services as illegal, reducing choice for families and forever diminishing the knowledge base in natural birthing. I find this notion both outrageous and alarming.

For thousands of years, woman have been giving birth in their natural environment with the assistance of knowledgeable woman in their community who they entrust to assist them with the birth of their child. These woman have passed their knowledge on and in the modern day have become professionals, well learned with high standards.

By removing insurance cover, these professionals will no longer be able to practice in their chosen field and birthing mothers will be subjected to being removed from their comfortable natural environment to one in which they have no power or control over their birth. No good reason has been given for this change, although there are a huge variety of possible negative repercussions which the government should explore.

In Australia, there will only be one type of birth, and that will be in a hospital under medical supervision, as it appears that this government are of the view that woman under the care of capable and registered midwives cannot be trusted to birthing at home in their safe environment as they have been doing for thousands of years.

I have three children, all birthed at home with assistance from registered midwives. These experiences seemed perfectly natural and normal to me. My partner and I spent days preparing the nest for the birth, and she was able to birth in the environment that we had lovingly established together to welcome our child.

My first child was born in our bedroom, in the presence of two registered professionals who offered encouragement without interfering, always taking the lead from my partner unless it was necessary that they take further measures. This first birth was not without some minor complications which the midwives handled without alarming either my partner, myself or the infant.

After the birth, we all went to bed together as a new family, in our home environment the way that we always do. There was no separation of either the mother or the father from the infant as there would have been under the regime that the government are proposing. We were in control of our lives. We had choice.

My partner and I do not want to give birth in a hospital! We have paid for the privilege of our choice to birth at home in our natural environment. We haven't asked the government to cough up for the expenses that we incurred. It would be economically sensible for the government to encourage home birth, as home births are far less expensive than a hospital birth, and tend to have less complications.

In many other countries around the world, birthing is moving away from the 1950's paradigm of a woman not being capable of taking control of birthing, shifting this control to men in hospitals. Other advanced western countries are encouraging homebirth, and subsidising birthing at home as a part of their medical system. Why is Australia harking back to the 1950's?

I believe a Modern Australia is a liberal country, where its citizens have choice and are offered a high standard of human rights. A change to the status of private homebirth midwives represents a backward step, diminishing the rights of woman and families and extinguishing choice in birthing options.

I say NO! to any legislation or change in policy that would make homebirthing less available, and the government should too.

Sincerely

Marcus Deuchar