

Impact statement from Sonia Martin,

- Are you/and your partner still planning to have more children? Possibly
- If not, do you have friends/family who will be affected if homebirth is not an option for them? Yes, my sister in law.
- What about your own children's birthing choices? I have four sons who think it is perfectly normal to have babies at home. When women have babies in hospital the first question they ask is "What is wrong?"
- How do you think an absence of homebirth and independent midwifery services might impact on your community? Our community has lost it's birthing services all together.
- Will your local hospital be likely to provide a homebirth program? Having been on the board of management I can say that I think it is entirely unlikely for many reasons. Lack of midwives, lack of funding, it is a rural community with a declining birth rate.
- If you are planning to have more children, will you want to choose homebirth? 110% YES
- What will you do after July 2010? I'm not sure. I hope that sense will be seen and my midwives can continue in their private practice.
- Do you live a long way from mainstream maternity care? My babies tend to be born very quickly. I wouldn't have made it to a hospital with my last two babies. If I hadn't been planning a homebirth – well I guess they would have been born in the drive way or on the side of the road!!
- Will you choose to birth with an 'underground' midwife? Is an option – but it should never come to that!
- If so, what will this mean? An unacceptable situation – for midwives and mother & babies & their family.
- Will your family and friends 'keep quiet' about it? I wouldn't explain in the 'ins' and 'outs' of the situation to them.
- How will you get info - by word of mouth? Not sure – hopefully my midwives would continue to practice and they have a great library and sets of references.
- Will you be willing to pay cash? Yes
- How will you get all the routine tests performed? For my last 3 children I have had a shared care arrangement with a GP & my midwives. My GP is very supportive of home birth. When I first told him that I wanted to have my babies at home he said "I so understand that!"
- How will you register the birth? I guess when I next went to my GP with the baby, I'd have to make that in the 'dedicated' time frame though.
- Will you have the same level of comfortability with your midwife? No – not at all because there are too many forces working against them and they may have to stop practicing at any time. I wouldn't be sure they'd be there for the birth until it actually happened.
- What if complications arise during the birth? Would do a hospital transfer as per usual except then I'd be on my own because they wouldn't be able to accompany me.
- What sorts of concerns would you have about the whole situation? As Above
- Will you choose to birth at home *without* a trained midwife? NO
- What considerations do you face in that situation? My midwives are trained, great, compassionate, supportive, encouraging, etc. etc. I need all of that when birthing my babies. They also have all the necessary first line emergency aid for me & bubs.
- If an independent midwife assists you pre-natally, or provides lactation consultancy, or post-birth support, or is mysteriously present during your birth anytime after July 2010, then they could face legal action (if they're caught). What do you think about that? Absolutely ludicrous! Let us not all be sent to the hospital for inductions and highly interventionist births where information is giving on a medico legal basis and not what is best for Mum & baby.....

- How will it affect you/your family? Not sure that I could go ahead and have a baby in hospital, especially after having three babies at home. I here the stories of my friends hospital births and it make me feel sick – and very sorry for them.
- If you with-hold information about a midwife who's still practicing unregistered, you could be legally liable. How do you feel about that? How ridiculous!!!

REGARDING THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION FOR CHANGES TO MATERNITY CARE IN AUSTRALIA –

MY STATEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:

Midwives that provide homebirth support to women are in integral part of our society. Only a few women have homebirths currently, but when midwives in private practice have professional indemnity insurance and a Medicare provider number....two things will happen. More midwives will take up the private practice option and homebirth will be more affordable for more women. The rate of homebirths will increase. The care that midwives provide in home births is exceptional. The outcomes from homebirths are far superior to those achieved in hospital (refer perinatal data collection unit statistics). Midwives have fewer complications and a far lower caesarean rate and provide the care at far less cost than standard hospital births. Midwifery and homebirth practices are far more closely aligned to the World health Organisation recommendations.

I am very thankful for the wonderful care that my midwives have provided to me before, during and after the birth of three of my children. I experienced a hospital birth with my first child and it was horrible. My three homebirths have been radically different to that experience and gave me confidence in myself, my body and my abilities as a mother. My first homebirth was a healing experience, and after that I knew I could do anything! As a mother I was more connected to my baby, happier, healthier and breast fed my baby for much longer. My homebirths have been really positive experiences. I have not heard women talk about there hospital births in the same way. Birth doesn't have to be a horrible, traumatic, powerless experience – quite to the contrary. Allow midwives to provide trained, professional independent care of women – for the sake of women and babies (and our society!).

IMPACT STATEMENT PROVIDED BY:

Sonia Martin

SIGNED:

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