

I wanted to write about something I feel very strongly about. I am very upset and angry that Nicola Roxon is trying to force Australian women into having their babies in Hospitals and making it illegal for them to birth at home with the support of doulas and midwives. The Maternity Services review was supposed to provide choice for Australian women – not remove our rights! I personally have had nothing but negative experiences in Hospitals with my babies. I was railroaded into a caesarean with my 1st child and was made to feel as if I had no choices. This affected my life in such a huge way – I ended up with post natal depression, an awful infection from a botched surgery and my choices in birthing were now limited. I desperately wanted midwife led care for my 2nd pregnancy but was denied this due to having a previous caesarean. I could not find an obstetrician willing to allow me to have a VBAC and my choice in hospitals was also diminished as some hospitals have a policy of not allowing VBACs and if they do allow them, they impose a lot of rules and regulations on the mother. I ended up having to labour at home for 26 hours before making a mad dash to the hospital 40 minutes away to have my daughter. Heaven forbid something had gone wrong! With my son (and 3rd child) I was told I could attempt VBAC but a week past my due date was told I would have to consent to a c/s or I would not be allowed to deliver at the hospital. This has set off a whole new cascade of feelings and I feel like the system has failed me again.

I would desperately love to have another child and my husband and I are planning a 4th baby in 2-3 years. I am truly devastated at the thought of not being able to CHOOSE to have a homebirth with a midwife present. I will not step foot in another hospital to be treated like one of the numbers and be forced to submit to having another baby ripped out of my abdomen. Do any of the people there actually understand what it feels like to be forced into a major surgery against their will? Traumatizing doesn't even start to cover it. Not to mention the cost to the health system of the operation, the cost of the treatment for depression which inevitably follows and the added long term consequence of failing to bond with your child immediately. My only option now will be to free birth at home and hope like hell that nothing goes wrong. I hope ambulance officers are getting crash courses in delivering babies from 2010 because a lot of women will choose to stay at home to labour and call the ambos when the baby is coming rather than submit to the will of Drs and deliver in a hospital. All this legislation will accomplish is more risk and potentially babies and mother's dying or being seriously injured. Mums will stay home to have their babies with or without a midwife – surely it would be safer for everyone if the Government allowed midwives to attend to homebirths. I work for the [REDACTED] and I can personally attest to the fact that more babies and mums die in Hospitals than during homebirths. Is it going to take babies dying at home without midwives/health professionals present for these laws to be reversed?

Shame on you Nicola Roxon and shame on you Labor Government for setting women's rights back 50 years. I am truly sorry I ever voted for you.

Please reconsider the legislation to make it fair and safe for all mums. I ask that you:

- require insurance for all professionals except those for whom insurance is not available

OR

- Government support to ensure that PI insurance is available for midwives

Thank you.