

to the Senate Committee:

regarding currently proposed legislation that will lead to the outlawing of homebirth -

whilst I support the principal of access to good maternal health care, as has been fought for by generations of women and as is still not achieved by many women in the world, I do not think this necessarily means a hospital birth in every case. I believe there are many benefits to a home birth, not the least of which is comfort, and I am dumbfounded as to why this option would be discouraged.

My daughter was born at home, with the attendance of a doctor and a midwife. It was a good, positive and healthy experience for all concerned.

In contrast to a miscarriage I had 11 months prior to this where I went into hospital. I was talked into taking medication (against my wishes) to try to halt the miscarriage, under duress "you DO want to save your baby don't you?". The medication made me vomit and the muscular convulsions of vomiting expelled the baby. I was not informed officially that I had lost the baby, I had to work it out for myself. I had to ask for over a day to see the baby, as I understood I would cope better psychologically if I did. This was not encouraged by the hospital. I ended up with a cyst in my uterus from a post-miscarriage curette. It is my belief that I would have fared better staying at home and allowing nature to take it's course and seeking medical care AFTER a miscarriage, if that was what happened, and if I needed it.

This informed my position that I would fare better to have a homebirth with my baby. I considered all of the risks and decided that any which could not be handled at home in the care of the midwife would not be worsened by the travel to hospital, with the exception of haemorrhage. Vitamin K is used to assist with blood clotting and I therefore consumed a diet high in vitamin K during my pregnancy to reduce the risk of haemorrhage.

Giving birth at home was one of the most enriching experiences of my life and assisted with bonding between myself and my (now adult) daughter. I was in a familiar, comfortable environment, and breastfeeding began easily and comfortably. There was no 'transition' to make to home, we were already there.

My sister went on to have two positive homebirths.

I believe that pregnancy and birth are not an illness. It is a life experience that most women go through and that usually results in a live baby. I think the focus should be on the experience of the woman, so that birthing can be as positive as possible for her. I believe that this leads to more straight forward birthing and bonding and is what is better for the baby. Many women feel more safe and comfortable in a hospital, but this should not be the only option. This is a quality of life decision. Please don't take action which will reduce quality of life in Australia.

Linda Seaborn