

To whom it may concern,

I don't usually get involved in the politics of our country beyond the actual voting activity. Once the government is elected I tend to sit back and criticise how the country is run with the majority of the population I suspect. But this year I have come to the realisation that if I don't get my voice heard, there is no one who will speak up for me and it's time that we as a nation did something about a whole bunch of issues that are rapidly coming to a head.

One of these issues is the availability of indemnity insurance and registration of independant midwives. I would like to advise you that I don't have kids at this stage. My husband and I have been trying for three years come August to conceive and have resorted to IVF over the past six months. I bring this to your attention only because it is relevant to the personal choice we have made relating to how our future children will be born.

We are passionate advocates for homebirth to be available to all women in Australia who would choose this option. I feel it is especially important as an option to those who have undergone IVF treatment in order to conceive their child(ren). When what should be an enjoyable, intimately personal and fairly straight forward exercise becomes a circus with a cast of thousands that is technical, clinical and emotionally exhausting, there is no romance left in the conception and carrying of a child. I feel that the option of homebirth would be another way to heal the feelings of being "broken" when your body cannot do what it is naturally designed to do. When you cannot conceive the way you imagined, birthing the way you want becomes an even bigger need. It is a need that I am prepared to fight for.

Now, don't get me wrong, hospitals have a place in our society, as do doctors and specialists such as obstetricians. Their place is with the sick and endangered. The majority of pregnant women are not sick. They are not endangered by their pregnancies. They do not need to be in hospital in order to have happy, healthy babies. Leave the specialists to help the women who need help and let the healthy ones have the option of not clogging up beds in our bursting hospitals if they choose to birth at home. Let them choose their care provider, and let them have the option of legally choosing an independant midwife to assist with a homebirth.

It is no coincidence that the second oldest profession (after prostitution) is midwifery! Women seek support from midwives who they feel listen to and respect their birthing wishes. Hospitals, while sometimes trying to accommodate these wishes, often have to take into consideration hospital policy which usually works against a labouring women because hospital policy is based on averages and EVERY PREGNANCY IS DIFFERENT. You cannot predict that this labouring woman will react or progress in this way, even based on her other pregnancies.

I realise that this is an emotive plea and that I do not have statistics to back up the claims made in this email. I have read the studies. I intuitively understand their conclusions. And I want to be able to

exercise my right to birth wherever I want, with the care providers of my choice by my side.

Yours sincerely,
Ceilidh Meo.