

Regarding Homebirth as an option for women and families of Australia

My son was born at home last year on August 27, 2008. I choose to have a home birth as my local hospitals did not allow water births. My first son was born in the water at a birth centre in 2006 and after this experience I understood how important water was as a natural pain relief method during labour and birth.

I also really wanted to involve my family in the birth of our second son. I had the most amazing birth at home under the guidance of a beautiful, professional highly experienced midwife.

I am extremely disappointed (to say the least) that homebirth is going to be taken away as an option for women giving birth in Australia. I must admit that before giving birth and being introduced to natural birth during a pregnancy group while I was pregnant with my first son, I was unfamiliar and very unsure about homebirth as a concept. I believe that this is because giving birth in a hospital has become the assumed practice in Australia. However, I feel very strongly that homebirth must remain available to all women in Australia and that it must be advocated as a natural, family centred option for women and their families. I urge policy makers to speak to as many home birthing women as possible to discover the amazing positive benefits that can be had by giving birth at home and if possible to attend a home birth!

It wasn't until I heard direct accounts about homebirth and investigated all of my options that I became aware of the benefits of not having to go hospital to give birth. So many people I speak to do not even know that you can give birth at home. If you ban homebirth this knowledge and the positive benefits will die out.

Home birth is not just for "hippies". My husband and I both have post graduate qualifications and have researched all the information about home birth. Babies do die during home birth. These deaths are often sensationalised. Babies also die in hospital! These deaths rarely if ever receive media attention. If the government bans home birth, women will still choose to have their babies at home but as they will not have access to professional, highly qualified midwives there will be more death and injury.

I am very grateful for the advancements in modern medicine and the medical support available when giving birth in Australia. I fully acknowledge that I was lucky in the fact that I did not need intervention during my birth. The beauty of home birth when supported by a midwife is that if during my birth something goes wrong I still have access to that medical care. I had total faith that if anytime during my birth my midwife thought that my baby or I needed to be hospitalised I would have been sent to hospital. If the government is considering limiting homebirth, perhaps they could consider only allowing low risk women or those in areas who can be transferred safely to a hospital if need be?

If women choose to give birth safely at home they must be supported in this decision and be entitled to the care they deserve. I urge you to contact myself and my husband to discuss why we chose home birth or any other questions you may have.

Yours sincerely
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