

To whom it may concern,

I would like to make a brief submission for the Inquiry into the administration of health practitioner registration by AHPRA. My concern is about the current practices around investigations of homebirth midwives by the Nursing and Midwifery Board.

It's my understanding that currently, if a homebirth midwife warrants investigation, the midwife's practice is limited to 'Must work only in a hospital and under supervision'. For a homebirth midwife in private practice, this restriction can render the midwife unable to practice for a year or more, depriving the midwife of income and the community of a qualified and experienced midwife.

I would question whether similar conditions would be placed on other practitioners in private practice- for example, physiotherapists, psychologists etc? Surely there are better and more timely ways of reviewing complaints so that midwives in private practice can get back to doing the job they do best- supporting women to give birth.

I would ask that the following recommendations be made:

1. Reduce the investigation time down to weeks, not years;
2. Develop interim conditions that allow the midwife to continue supporting clients until the investigation is complete. One option could be peer review or regular meetings with a midwife-in-private practice mentor; and
3. Review the nature of recent complaints from hospitals, to determine whether these complaints are fair and reasonable, or whether in fact they are deliberately aiming to attack midwives in private practice.

I request that an urgent review of this process takes place immediately and that some balance be restored.

Yours sincerely,
Naomi Waldron