

REGARDING:

INQUIRY: ADMINISTRATION OF HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGISTRATION BY  
THE AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION AGENCY  
(AHPRA)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this submission in relation to the conditions placed on Independent Midwives prior to investigative processes following a formal complaint.

This process is open to exploitation by those with vested interests in undermining the care provided by independent midwives during the antenatal, birth and postnatal periods.

In particular, this process of complaint allows those with close affiliations and interests in supporting a hospital based care system to effectively block independent midwives from working before any formal investigation into the complaint has taken place.

I hold grave concerns for the rights of choice for birthing families and the rights of midwives to work independently. Under this process a midwife could have her rights to care for families seriously undermined through these restrictions; forcing families *against their choice* to seek alternative care arrangements, which ultimately places *greater risk on outcomes* for those families and their infants.

As a person that has had to face a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder following the birth of my first child through the hospital system it was deemed unsafe by my psychologist (whom I had been working with for 2 years) to enter a hospital system for the birth of my second child. My family needed my independent midwife to be there for the entire pregnancy, birth and postnatal journey. Had she been forced to stop caring for our family during such a critical time in our lives due to the restrictions placed by a possible complaint made by competing interested parties would have been just devastating for our family.

As it stands our midwife and her organisation provided a continuity of care that results in great outcomes for mother and baby and this was certainly the case for our young family. It is a frightening reality that this service is slowly being undermined and eroded through proposed policies such as these that ultimately seek to ban independent midwifery care and homebirth. This form of care is valid and it is within our rights to be able to seek such care without reprobation and intimidation by government or lobbyist groups.

I request that an urgent review of this process takes place immediately and that some balance be restored. Midwifery and homebirth is not a crime.

Regards,

Clare Shamier