

To whom it may concern,

The current situation by which independent midwives are being processed if there has been a complaint against them is totally unacceptable, unfair, unjust and unethical. No conditions should be placed on any midwife before an investigation has taken place; this is tantamount to a person being guilty until proven innocent.

I have grave concerns that at any time my midwife could find her registration under restriction and this would exclude her from continuing to be my main care provider. This will force me into the hospital system or to choose to free birth. Regardless, it deprives me of my right as a woman to choose how I will be cared for when birthing. This is an attack on my rights, as well as those of the midwife.

As a university educated, private citizen who had a (non-traumatic) public hospital birth for my first child, I was left disillusioned with the over-medicalisation of birth within hospitals as well as the archaic treatment of the mother and father in the maternity ward after I had my child. To send a father home on the first night his child has entered the world I feel is not only an outdated and sexist practice, but also a heartbreaking event for the family concerned. That this practice is still in place in any hospitals in this country is one of only a myriad of reasons I have chosen to homebirth with any future children I have.

This is merely my personal opinion; other women do not share this dissatisfaction with the hospital system. Just as it is their right to choose a hospital birth (to paraphrase the quote, I may not agree with what you are doing, but will defend to the death your right to do it), so it is my right to choose a homebirth for my second child. With the unjust system currently in place for processing complaints against independent midwives, my right to choose the birth I have carefully researched and which I believe based on sound science is best for myself, my baby and my family, is yet again being threatened by what I see as dubiously justified government intervention which feels more like strong-arm tactics than a genuine attempt to protect me as a consumer.

I request that an urgent review of this process takes place immediately and that some balance be restored. Midwifery and homebirth are not a crime, regardless of how some Obstetrical lobby groups in Australia would like to portray it. In fact, in some countries where rigorous, objective and internationally accepted medical studies are taken seriously, midwifery and homebirth are seen as valid and safe alternatives to hospitalised births. It is time midwives were given the respect they have earned as professional birth attendants and be treated justly in the complaints process.