

Submission to the inquiry into the administration of health practitioner registration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

To whom it may concern,

The complaints process as applied to independent midwives is deplorable. It is not achieving safe and ethical practice, in fact the opposite is true. To marginalise, ostracise and publicly question the integrity of a devoted, skilled, and honourable independent midwife is doing the community an injustice. Midwifery practice is a highly skilled and evidence-based practice, and should not be undermined regardless of whether it is hospital or community based.

It is almost incomprehensible that one health professional might knowingly jeopardise the reputation of another, in the absence of sound reason. Perhaps even more disturbing is the propensity for the accused health professional to be segregated and subjected to the confinements of conditional practice before any thorough investigation has even taken place. Not only does this have devastating and far-reaching implications for the independently practicing midwife, it places her clients in an extremely vulnerable position.

I cannot support such a complaints process, when it so distastefully undermines the integrity and skilled professionalism of such vital members of our health community. Removing or restricting their practicing rights without evidence is not only unethical, it is unsafe. For it renders her/his clients without their primary care provider, and greatly restricts their birthing options. Treating midwives as though they are a miscreant, without acknowledging their basic human rights is maleficent. Ultimately, the birthing women in this society who are rapidly losing their innate right to make choices regarding their care are suffering. I would therefore be inclined to question the integrity of any person or agency that supported this process.

I request that an urgent review of this process takes place immediately, and that midwives be treated with the respect owing to them.

Yours Sincerely,

Patricia Stratton