

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.

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

I have birthed in the private system and after experiences that left a lot to be desired, I made the educated decision to birth my third child at home with an independent midwife. The continuity of care I received was un-paralleled in comparison to the private system and pivotal in my decision to birth at home with the midwife I choose. During my pre and postnatal care as well as during my labour and birth of my son, our health and needs were our midwives only concerns. This is a far cry from the private hospital system where fitting into timelines that were designed for my obstetricians convenience were the paramount concern.

I believe that restricting a midwife's practice before an investigation has taken place is a huge violation of my right to choose how and where I birth my child. Women should have the right to continuity of care with a practitioner of their choosing. Potentially taking this away part way through a pregnancy when allegations have not been proven is not only unethical it is immoral. Childbirth is a natural and normal life event; it is not an illness. These restrictions are not about the well being of women and children but about trying to restrict the practice of independent midwives. If it were really about the well being of women then obstetricians and doctors would be placed under the same restrictions.

How the health fraternity can justify the constant attacks on independent midwifery beggars belief whilst obstetricians with rates of intervention well above what the W.H.O. recommends are allowed to continue without question and are held up as the providers of gold standard in care. You only have to look at South Australia's pregnancy outcomes for the last year to see that home birth with an independent midwife is not only the safest way to birth but the only way where women and babies are truly the primary concern. This is in fact the gold standard of care and should be what all birth practitioners and hospitals should be aiming for not the other way around!

Gabrielle Mutton

