

To whom it may concern,

I am concerned about the current complaint process regarding independent midwives.

I have had two homebirths. The first, in 2005 was attended by an independent midwife, who had provided all the antenatal care. The pregnancy and birth went smoothly and was an amazing and positive experience for all of our family.

In 2007 I had another homebirth. This time, there were no independent midwives located within a 50km radius. We decided to do it alone, as I had previously had 3 uncomplicated pregnancies and births. Unfortunately, our fourth birth was not without complication. Our baby had trouble breathing without effort after the birth. We had to call an ambulance and were transported to hospital. With some medical help, our baby was fine, and is now a boisterous four year old. This situation would have gone much more smoothly for all, if an independent midwife had been available to provide oxygen and medical assistance to our child straight after birth, and to provide crossover care to the paramedics and hospital staff.

I rejoice that since then, four independent midwives have begun servicing my area, and I have heard many joyous stories of families welcoming their newest member in the safety and warmth of their own home, attended by a midwife they know.

People are going to choose homebirth regardless of government decisions. It is therefore up to the government to allow these people to do so in the safest way- and that is with an independent midwife.

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. And homebirth, assisted by an independent midwife is as safe, or safer, than birthing in hospital.