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BIRTHINGS

A HOMEBIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

The Fourth Stage

Plus all our regular features, birth notices, letters, your stories and pictures & updates on our community activities.

www.homebirthsydney.org.au

HOME BIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY COMMITTEE* & OFFICE BEARERS

HAS Coordinator* Virginia Maddock
02 9501 0863 | info@homebirthsydney.org.au

Assistant Coordinator Jo Tilly
jotilly2009@gmail.com

Treasurer* Greta Werner
0402 035 069 shop@homebirthsydney.org.au

Secretary* Vacant

Birthings Editor Virginia Maddock
02 95010863 | editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

Birthings Sub Editor Amanda Vella

Birthings Line Editors Jaia Shanti Baer & Sandy Bucknell

Birthings Design Leah White
leah_white@hotmail.co.nz

Website Jenny Carleton
0412 970 183 | admin@homebirthsydney.org.au

Events Coordinator Vacant

Advertising Coordinator Karen Gallagher
advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au

Memberships Coordinator Virginia Maddock
0415 683 074 | member@homebirthsydney.org.au

Merchandising Coordinator* Sarah McLean
0423 346 690 | sales@homebirthsydney.org.au

Media Watch Sarah McLean

Mail Officer Akal Khalsa

Volunteer Coordinator Aurelie Giles
volunteer@homebirthsydney.org.au

Calendar Sandy Bucknell
70s.sandy@gmail.com

Fundraising & Sponsorship Leanne Clarke lclarke2@tpg.com.au

Distribution Coordinator Sandy Bucknell

General Information info@homebirthsydney.org.au

*Offices marked with an asterisk are listed as official committee members in compliance with the responsibilities of running an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984.

HONORARY LIFE &
FOUNDING MEMBERS
Maggie Lecky-Thompson
Elaine Odgers Norling

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS
Robyn Dempsey
Jo Hunter
Akal Khalsa

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the named contributors only and are not necessarily shared by Homebirth Access Sydney, its Committee or the Editors or Editorial Board of Birthings.

CONTRIBUTIONS, PHOTOS, CORRESPONDENCE

Please send to Virginia Maddock at editor@homebirthsydney.org.au
Photos and written submissions must be emailed. Prior notice to the Editors of your intention to submit work is not necessary, but can be helpful in planning content.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Spring 2011	No. 111	1 August 2011
Summer 2011	No. 112	1 November 2011
Autumn 2012	No. 113	1 February 2012
Winter 2012	No. 114	1 May 2012

BACK ISSUES Back issues of Birthings are like hen's teeth! But we will try to accommodate requests. Back issues cost \$4.00 – \$7.00 per issue. Postage is \$3.00 per single copy. A price for multiple copies can be arranged. The magazine is very valuable in that it contains many birth stories and information, plus give an insight into the homebirth movement and HAS activities.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS Please notify any change of address to HAS, PO Box 66, Broadway, NSW 2007 or by email to the Memberships Coordinator at: member@homebirthsydney.org.au

CONTRIBUTING TO BIRTHINGS

The strength of Birthings is all the thoughtprovoking, inspiring and challenging writing from members of our community. To ensure that the magazine is balanced, responsive to our audience's interests and needs, and reflects the priorities of HAS, we have developed a set of contribution guidelines. We also work with an editorial board, selected by the HAS executive, to reflect the range of people in our community. The founding board members are Maggie Lecky-Thompson, Adrienne Abulhawa, Jo Hunter, Sarah McLean and the current editor, Virginia Maddock. The role of the editorial board is outlined in the guidelines below.

CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

Here are some guidelines for how to write your story, and what happens once you have submitted it for our consideration.

WHAT TO SUBMIT Submissions are sought on the theme of the issue as stated on the back cover of the previous issue. Your response to the theme may be in a range of formats: poetry, opinion, artistic, personal or factual.

We also welcome birth stories from members. Your birth story is a special part of your family's journey and the story of homebirth in Sydney. It is also a great gift to share with other parents, especially those preparing for the birth of their own babies.

Other submissions apart from those outlined above are also very welcome, though we may not always be able to publish them, as we often receive more submissions than we have space to print. We will get back to you as soon as possible with a response and discuss the possibilities. If you have an idea for a submission that you would like to discuss before writing fully, please feel free to send us an email with an outline. We love a good idea!

STYLE Your submission should be written in your own style. You do not need to be a professional writer or have a poetic style to give a moving and interesting account of your own experience.

Your submitted writing should be all your own work – you must not borrow or copy words written by someone else, unless they are attributed quotes of a reasonable length.

LENGTH Please write your story in the amount of words you think you need. As a guideline, most birth stories work best when they are under 1200 words. Submissions on the theme should be under 1700 words.

We may edit for length and style and so may cut your story to ensure it is appropriate for use in BIRTHINGS.

EDITING Your story will be checked by our team of editors. The intention is to retain your voice, while ensuring that grammar, spelling and other style issues are correct and of a high quality. Your story may also be cut for length (see above).

Your story may not defame any person. If the editorial team is concerned that an issue of defamation may exist, we may decline to publish your work or require the defamatory material to be removed prior to publication.

If any major editing is recommended by our editors, we will contact you for permission and return a copy of the edited material for your approval. If our standard editing procedure is applied, we will not send it for your approval.

PICTURES We encourage you to submit some high-resolution digital images with your story, especially with birth stories. We will include as many as we can to illustrate your story.

TERMS OF USE Please note that by submitting your story to Birthings you warrant that the content is not confidential and that you have the right to offer it for publication. You also agree that you grant Birthings the copyright permission for the purposes of publication in this magazine and on the Homebirth Access Sydney website.

EDITORIAL BOARD All stories will be put before the editorial board before publication. The board's duties include:

- Reviewing copy to ensure it reflects the priorities of HAS and the interests and needs of its members and the community,
- Supporting the editors to make editorial decisions,
- Providing a guide for the future direction of the magazine.

PROCEDURES Please provide your story as a Microsoft Word or equivalent document attached to an email and sent to Virginia Maddock at: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

You will be notified immediately of receipt and contacted before publication. There is often more material than we can publish submitted for each issue of Birthings. If your story cannot be published due to space limitations we will contact you. In some cases we will ask your permission to hold a story over for a future issue.

Thank you so much for considering a contribution to Birthings. Your experiences and insights are what makes the magazine so rich and interesting, and such a valuable resource for the homebirth community.

With thanks to our postage sponsor

nature's child

BIRTHINGS

The Fourth Stage

REGULARS

Editorial	VIRGINIA MADDOCK	5
Letters to the Editor		5
Birth Announcements		6
Coordinator's Report	VIRGINIA MADDOCK	8
Heart to Heart		9
Committee Member Profile	LISA DEVENNEY	10

FEATURES

12	Lotus Births	DR SARAH J. BUCKLEY
13	My Lovely Long Sleep In	MELODIE GLASS
14	The Postnatal Doula	RENEE ADAIR
16	Wrapped in the Hormone of Love	JENNY CARLETON
20	From Darkness to Light	KIM RYDER
22	Giving One Percent	ALISON LEMMEN
24	Cartoon	HEATHER CUSHMAN DOWDEE

HAS Merchandise 26 BIRTH STORIES

28	Jackie's Birth	PATRICIA TWAALFHOVEN
30	Maya's Birth	KIM MCNAMARA
32	Diesel's Birth	AMANDA KANE
34	Johny Ray's Birth	OLIVIA SOLOMON
36	Mason's Birth	KATE CLARKE

38	Media Watch	SARAH MCLEAN
----	-------------	--------------

40	HAS Info Library
----	------------------

42	Services
----	----------

46	Calendar
----	----------

FRONT COVER



Photo of Kim McNamara and Maya, courtesy of Sheryl Siderly

BACK COVER



Photo of Virginia Maddock 2009, courtesy of Jennifer Jamie @ www.photographart.com.au and designed by Leah White



Contributors

Alison Leemen is a former HAS Committee member, mother of two home-birther boys, and the founder of Giving One Percent Inc, a not-for-profit association formed to support a culture of giving in Australia, with tools to help make your research and decision-making easier. When she's not hatching a plan to save the world, she's busy dreaming about which part of it to visit. www.givingonepercent.org.au

Amanda Kane lives on the north shore of Sydney with her American hubby Peter, darling son Diesel and American staffy Jemma. Amanda was a literacy specialist at Cranbrook Junior School but now prefers to be a devoted mum to Diesel. After her amazing homebirth she is passionate about women's birth choices, homebirth, attachment parenting, emotional intelligence and heartfelt parenting.

Kate Clark lives in Sydney with her husband, Garrett and two blessings Tara - 3 and Mason - 4 months. Previously a nanny, Kate now enjoys being a stay at home mum and sharing educational activities for children on her blog: <http://homelearningfrombirth.blogspot.com/>

Kim McNamara lives with her husband Donald and newborn daughter Maya in Sydney. She is a university researcher in media and communications, and is currently writing a book on paparazzi while caring for Maya.

Kim Ryder lives with her partner Karl and her fairly-new-to-the-world homebirth bubba Treya, on the central coast. Kim surprised herself with her choice to homebirth, previously thinking she'd take the painless option of an epidural. Needless to say, she is extremely thankful that she "wised up". Kim and Karl fell pregnant without even consciously trying, before embarking on a 5 month 'round Oz trip 4WDing! She is a qualified alcohol and other drugs worker and educator, and has worked as a community artist. In her now somewhat limited spare time, Kim likes to paint and photograph.

Jenny Carleton is the founder of the website Natural Parenting in Sydney (www.npsyd.com.au) which is an information source and guide to services and products for the instinctive parent. She sold the site when she took on the role of Homebirth Access Sydney's website developer, in addition to her role as advertising coordinator. She has since scaled back, just managing the HAS website, so she can spend more time with her 8 and 4 year olds, pursuing a life more oriented around sustainable living, slow cooking and seasonal craft.

Melodie Glass is married to Nik and is the mother of Isabelle (8/08/08) and Stella (29/11/10) who were both born at home. She is an early childhood educator, researcher and writer with a background in the creative arts. She lives in Armidale, where she teaches at TAFE and has recently started a new business 'Nurtured Beginnings' - teaching infant massage to parents. She is coordinator of the Armidale and District Homebirth Support Network.

Olivia Solomon is a 32 year old stay at home mother of 2 (Jacinta and Johnny), living on the northern beaches. She completed her marketing Diploma at TAFE NSW and also her Cert 4 & 5 in fitness and personal training. She takes classes and trains individual women pre-natal and post-natal on fitness and nutrition (her business name is Activ8urnrg Personal Training). Olivia incorporated fitness into her birth by training physically, mentally and emotionally. Olivia's vision is to create a loving, caring and supportive environment for her family. This is what makes her happy.

Patricia Twaalfhoven is married to Roland van Amstel. They moved from their home country the Netherlands to Sydney Australia in 2000, simply to bring some 'adventure' to their lives. They live in the Northern Beaches and have well developed careers in the transport consultancy, and sales to the mining industry areas. Their wish and attempts to establish a family is a long 10 year story including IVF, foster care, and waiting to adopt from Ethiopia. Their newborn Jackie Annabel was - and is! - an absolute surprise, and their new joyfull adventure in life!

Renee Adair has been working with women and babies since 1994, and in 1998 she became a doula, childbirth and early parenting educator and birth counselor. She is the founder and principal educator of the Australian Doula College and the registered charity Doula Heart Network. Renee has volunteered for a variety of services over the years including Homebirth Access Sydney, and is now the convener of Homebirth Australia. www.australiandoula.com.au

Sarah J Buckley is author of the bestselling book 'Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering' and is a trained GP / family physician with qualifications in GP-obstetrics and family planning. She is the mother of four home-born children, and currently combines full-time motherhood with her work as a writer on pregnancy, birth, and parenting. Her personal interests and hobbies include yoga and meditation (which she has practiced for over 20 years), natural family health and healing, camping, bushwalking, hiking, swimming, world music, and dancing. <http://www.sarahbuckley.com/>

Virginia Maddock is Birthings editor, memberships coordinator (for the time being) and newly appointed HAS coordinator. She is also a doula, herbalist and nutritionist for her business 'Natural Beginnings' and runs 'Beer and Bubs' (childbirth education for Dads at the pub) at her local. But her most important job is being a lover to her man Dan, mother to her 2 year old son Jetsun and growing another baby to birth at home in the Spring. www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

Membership

Homebirth Access Sydney is the only group of its kind in Sydney. It fills an extremely important function in providing a centrally organised group of caring people, gathering information and making it available to everyone who is interested in childbirth alternatives and the myriad related issues.

Please support this vital work by subscribing to birthings

- 3 year membership: \$90
- 1 year membership: \$40
- Midwives subscribing clients: \$20 per client

Membership entitles you to receive Birthings four times a year and satisfaction in knowing that your money is being used to keep the group alive in order to make it easier for families to birth at home.

Please deposit correct money into our bank account: Homebirth Access Sydney, BSB: 062 257, Acc #: 1017 2779 and email your details (as below) with receipt number to member@homebirthsydney.org.au, or send your completed form with cheque or money order to HAS, PO Box 66, Broadway, NSW 2007

*Name

*Address

*Telephone:

*Email:

Occupation:

Can you volunteer help?

(Typing, fundraising, emailing, events, organising etc.)

Please tick: New member Renewal Email receipt required

Please enclose: \$90 for 3-year membership
 \$40 for 1-year membership
 \$15 for midwife client membership (1-year)

Midwife's name:

*NOTE: REQUIRED ENTRY FOR OUR DATABASE.

For receipt request and enquiries: member@homebirthsydney.org.au

Editorial

VIRGINIA
MADDOCK

Welcome to our Winter issue: 'The Fourth Stage'. In this issue we focus on the postpartum period – those delicious first hours after the birth, up to the first six weeks or so. This can cover such a vast array of emotions, techniques, highlights and challenges, and I hope that we have covered some interesting topics. Sarah Buckley has written an article on lotus births, including those of her 3 children, Jenny Carleton has some great advice on babywearing, Renee Adair talks about the value of hiring postnatal doula support, and there are some touching personal stories such as Melodie Glass's lovely long post birth sleep-in and Kim Ryder's journey with postnatal depression. Of course we have some great homebirth stories and a pictorial too.



I have to face it all over again, though hopefully this time with a little more insight and experience.

I look back fondly on my memories of Jetsun as a newborn (and can't believe it is over 2 years ago!). After a three hour pushing stage, I did feel a little ripped off that my utter exhaustion overtook any feelings of post-birth euphoria that I was expecting after a natural birth, however once I recovered I loved discovering the new journey that is motherhood – the cuddles, the eventual smiles, the feeling like a complete woman. It wasn't all easy though, as no parenting journey ever is. There was the broken sleep, sore nipples, and the shock of adjusting my once very independent life to being on 24 hour beck and call to a very needy baby... and did I mention the broken sleep? I remember calling up my midwife Jacqui on the day that my partner Dan had gone back to work and sobbing on the phone to her "I can't put him down without him crying. I can't have a shower or even go to the toilet. I've created a monster!" - thinking that this attachment parenting gig had taught him bad habits that he'd never be happy without being held, which I could never hope to sustain on my own. Now that he's a 2 year old, those particular issues are behind me now and of course there are always new ones opening up; but expecting another baby is a daunting thought, knowing

Our next issue is on the topic of 'Gender' and we welcome your submissions on whatever this subject brings up for you. eg. Did you find out the gender of your baby whilst you were pregnant? If not, how did you feel waiting and that surprise of finding out in the moments after birth? Were you elated with what you got or disappointed, and did that feeling last or change quickly? Did you try any natural techniques for choosing your baby's gender and did it work, or not? Do you have numerous children of the one gender? Or do you have a mixture and how do they differ? Does having a boy or girl bring up any of your own issues from childhood? Are you a lesbian couple, and what highlights and challenges does this bring up in parenting your children, especially of the opposite gender? You may have a different idea to write about...

Of course as usual, we also welcome your birth announcements, birth stories, letters, art and poetry. Please email to editor@homebirthsydney.org.au.

Letters to the Editor

I have been meaning to write to you and raise one little concern I had with the last issue of Birthings. I found the articles about risk very interesting, but I was a bit concerned to see an article about an unassisted birth in there too. I feel very strongly that free birth should not be confused with home birth. I know both are 'at home' but I feel that those that choose to free birth are making a different birth choice to those of us who home birth. I think putting the two in the same basket can lead to more political difficulties for those of us who choose the HB and want the public to know that it is assisted medically and very safe. I know the woman was a midwife but I would question how she would be able to monitor and deal with tricky situations that may arise if she was in the act of labour~ for example how would she monitor the fetal heart-rate whilst she herself is having a contraction or stem her own hemorrhage (heaven forbid!)? I hope you don't mind me raising this as it was yet again an amazing and outstanding issue. I welcome your feedback too of course. – Name withheld

Editor: I appreciate your feedback and concern. I included the story because Linda who is a HAS member, opened her heart and wanted to share the birth of her son and I felt that it was just as valid a home birth story as any other that enter these pages, (including women who plan a homebirth and end up transferring to hospital during labour). I thought it was an amazing and beautiful story which outlined well her personal reasons for not having a midwife in attendance, which included previous hospital birth trauma and unwanted interventions in her last pregnancy and homebirth that she felt interfered with her own instincts.

Despite this not being the preferred option for most women who birth at home (myself included), I believe that those who do choose this, do not do so lightly but with much soul searching and research, and for varying personal reasons, and I respect their choice to do so. While HAS believes that birthing with a midwife is the safest option, and in our public and political dealings we do consistently make this point, we are also pro choice when it comes to the way women want to give birth. What we do oppose are any measures that may restrict women's choices which may make them free birth when it is not their preference, due to not feeling safe to birth in hospital but not having midwives legally available to attend them at home.

I do not feel that printing it is putting it in the same basket and I do not believe that our members who read Birthings would in any way be confused between homebirthing with a midwife, and birthing without.

I cannot speak on Linda's behalf as to what she would have done in the case of the complications you mentioned, but I know there are many effective alternative ways to deal with problems such as post partum haemorrhage, such as herbs, homoeopathics and placentophagy.

I think a pertinent quote is the title of Melanie Jackson's article in the last issue: "Risk is in the eye of the beholder!"

-Virginia.

Birth



Pete and Amanda Kane celebrate the birth of their first child, **Diesel Robert Kane**, born at 3:44pm September 24, 2010. After a long labour, Diesel was born on God's time, peacefully and on land in the family bedroom. We would like to thank our amazing midwife Akal Khalsa for her expertise, patience, and belief in me, and also huge thanks to Saraca, an incredible support during and after the birth. We give thanks each day for our incredible gift. Welcome Diesel!



We are thrilled to welcome **Stella Eve Glass** to the world. Born at home in Armidale, NSW at 1.10am on Monday 29th November 2010 in the loving company of her Daddy, Nanna, big 2.5-year-old sister and three wonderful midwives. 3.36kg and 52cm at birth, our little Stella is simply divine! Thank you to our wonderful lead midwife Robin from Tamworth Base Hospital who traveled the distance at night to birth our babe. Thank you also to our local midwives Maxine and Jenny for your amazing calming presence on the evening and your ongoing support.



Ben, Olivia and 2 ½ year old sister Jacinta Solomon are proud to announce the birth of **John Raymond Solomon** "Johnny-Ray", born on 31st January 2011 at 4.35pm, at home into water after 1 ½ hours of labour. He weighed 4kg, was 54 cm long with a 36cm head. A beautiful birth, supported by our wonderful midwives Shea Caplice and Sheryl Sidery.



Maya Audrey McNamara McNeill was born February 28, 2011 in the evening, at home in the water, weighing 3.5kg to proud parents Kim and Donald. Love and thanks for help on her birthday to Sheryl Sidery and Daana Seeney.



At 6:18am on April 5th 2011 Cyril Amantha and Ayden welcomed **Eli Bryce McGuinness** to the world. Born into water at home after a long and intense labour he weighed in at 4.3kg and 55cm. A very heartfelt thank you to our awesome support team; Kym and Hazel for sorting the household, your photographic skills and supporting the special big brother; Our beautiful Doula Romany for holding the space, you sure will make a wonderful midwife one day; to Renee, for saying just the right words at the right time; and of course our midwife Jo, thank you for your wisdom, support and friendship, and your awesome rebozo skills, you rock in more ways than one! Welcome Eli Bryce, we are so blessed to have you!

Announcements

Send your birth announcements with a photograph to editor@homebirthsydney.org.au



Garrett, Kate and big sister Tara welcomed to the world **Mason Rook Clark** at 3.44am on 26TH December 2010 weighing 3.7kg and 51.5cm. After a speedy labour of 1.5 hours, he was born calmly into water unassisted. Thanks to our midwife Jacqui Wood, for taking us on at such late notice, her experience and knowledge is like no other; our doula, Jan Gatti for her open heart and words of wisdom that I have learnt from and took not only into my labour but my life, and lastly my mother who supported my passion throughout - you are all incredible women!



Penelope Marion Bayl and Jonathan Walter Bayl are proud to announce the birth of their beautiful baby girl, **Naomi Anna Bayl**. She was born at 12.14am on 23rd January 2011, the day before her father's 31st birthday, at North Shore Hospital after a beautiful labour at home with the help of Penny's sister Laura and super-midwife Robyn Dempsey. We thank Robyn for helping us have an empowering birth despite the hospital transfer and minimal intervention.



Roland van Amstel and Patricia Twaalfhoven are pleased to announce our little daughter **Jackie Annabel**. Born at home on 8th April 2011, with private midwife Robyn Dempsey, after a story of 10 years - including a miscarriage, IVF, and the last 5 years waiting to adopt from Ethiopia. Jackie was (and is!) an absolute surprise and miracle for us ...:-)



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Coordinator's Report

VIRGINIA MADDOCK

I was hesitant to take on the HAS coordinator's position. After all, I already edit the magazine, process the memberships and write the e-newsletters. Surely I couldn't fit another job in, especially with expecting a baby later in the year. And Jo Tilly had done such a great job in the position for the last five years and was way more politically savvy than I, that I was not sure I could fill those huge shoes. But the AGM came up and there was no one willing or able to take it over, as the volunteers on our tiny committee have other commitments – among them a new midwifery career, a new school P & C secretary position, and growing family commitments with birthing becoming an ever distant memory. So I was worried there would be no one to pick up the reins and forge ahead with the enthusiasm needed to continue the good fight to help keep homebirth legal and alive.

Fortunately we had a brand new volunteer show up on that day - Lisa Deveney, recently moved from the UK and in advanced pregnancy (sharing the same midwife as myself) who kindly offered (or at least was subtly convinced) to take over the memberships position so that I could do it, and so I thought "What the hell. I'll give it a go!" But I do not let go of memberships easily. I have thoroughly enjoyed the last two years, keeping in contact with the midwives who so kindly shout their clients a subscription, getting to know the names of the homebirthing community of Sydney, and being on a steep learning curve in navigating the website and database. Lisa has recently had her baby so we congratulate her and we look forward to welcoming her baby girl, Tallulah Rose into the fold - I will be training Lisa for the position some time before the next issue.

Fortunately for me and for the organisation, I convinced Jo Tilly to stay on as Assistant Coordinator, for which I am ever so grateful, as she is a great sounding board and has kindly taken on the bulk of the writing of the recent government submissions which have suddenly and unexpectedly (for us) popped up in the last month, a job I do not feel experienced or comfortable at doing, but which she is a total pro at - more on that later.

We currently have two positions still in need of filling: Events Coordinator - to help organise HAS' presence at public events such as expos (in coordination with our volunteer coordinator), or if you would like to organise birth talks or film nights, or anything to raise the profile of homebirth and raise money for our organisation. And more importantly Secretary - which involves coming to monthly meetings and taking the minutes, and writing a report for this magazine every three months. Please contact me if this interests you.

In case you are new to the homebirth scene, or have been hiding under a rock for the past couple of months, homebirth midwifery is under attack. Up to 1/3 of privately practicing midwives in the country have been reported to the Nursing and Midwifery Board by hospitals, after they have transferred women in labour from home, for mostly spurious reasons. After reporting to the Board, these midwives have had restrictions put on their practices so that they can only work in a hospital setting under supervision, all without yet being investigated or proven guilty of any offense. This has left their careers and livelihoods on hold indefinitely, and the women they care for, some in late pregnancy, without a carer. HAS is very concerned with these developments, especially as it is happening now to some of our own Sydney midwives and could happen to any one of the midwives on our list in the future - we have addressed these issues in the following submissions.

The first submission was the Inquiry into the administration of health practitioner registration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). The second submission was in relation to the Draft of professional indemnity insurance for midwives guideline, the Revision of professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard and the 'Quantum of cover' for professional indemnity insurance for midwives guideline. Space does not suffice to go into what was written about here but these submissions can be found online. If you want direct links, please contact me. We will let you know of any new political developments as they arise.

Last month was International Midwives Day and HAS decided to post out a bunch of flowers to all the midwives on our list to thank them for their support for us and for you, their clients. From the comments that I received and from what I saw on Facebook, they were very warmly received and it gave me a buzz that they were so surprised and felt so appreciated. On the same day we also awarded an Honorary Lifetime Membership to one of our longest serving midwives Akal Khalsa, who has been with us from the beginning and is retiring this year. We thank her from the bottom of our hearts for supporting us for over 30 years and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

As new Coordinator in this highly volatile political climate, my aim is to forge better communication between us and other homebirth consumer groups, so that we can present a more united campaign to fight these onslaughts to women's rights to choose to birth safely at home. I have spoken to representatives of Maternity Coalition and Homebirth Australia, and am hoping to secure a joint meeting in the near future with both organisations to discuss the best way forward.

I would also like to keep in closer touch with you, our HAS members, so that the issues that consumers face never get lost and so that we as a consumer organisation can best represent you. Being pregnant, I am just as affected by these issues, which keeps me even more motivated to do the best I can. As part of this communication on a more 'social networking' level, I have recently set up the Homebirth Access Sydney Facebook page which I post any homebirth news and articles I come across – please come by and check it out if you haven't already.

Lastly I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who keeps HAS alive and Birthings going - the midwives who pay for their client's memberships; the advertisers who pay for ads in Birthings, newsletters and on our website; and especially to our only sponsor, Nature's Child, who voluntarily pay for our stationary and postage costs every quarter. Due to Nurture Nappies no longer being able to sponsor us (and we are so grateful for the time that they did), we rely on Nature's Child more than ever to get this magazine out to you. We hope that you will support them whenever you need anything for your babies – they really do have everything you need to keep your little ones healthy, clothed, dry and entertained. Without all of these supporters we would not be able to promote homebirth to the community and represent homebirth consumer interests to the government.

If you need to contact me for anything please email: info@homebirthsydney.org.au. I hope to see you at the Homebirth Australia Conference in August - I'll be the one with the very protruding gut at the HAS stand, so come by and say Hi!

- Virginia.

Heart to Heart

What is normal birth?

Artwork and quote submission
by Kim Ryder



“The question is disarmingly simple, like ‘What is love?’ I open my mouth to answer quickly, then close it again, suddenly humbled by the realisation that the answer is complex, emotional, elusive, rich, deep, and varied.

Images flash in my mind - I see beautiful, wet babies in their mothers’ arms, I smell the birth smell and feel holiness that hangs in the air; and I feel the wonder that rises in the presence of the wise and ancient process that is beyond human design or control.

Normal birth is the mother who stands up beside her bed where she has just given birth, faces me with her babe in arms, her eyes flashing fire and triumphantly shouts, ‘I did it!’.

Normal birth is the woman who dances the slow birth dance and sings the low birth song. It is the woman who is naked and not ashamed.

Normal birth is the woman who, though she has never been there before and did not know she knew the way, finds her path to the deep and quiet place within herself where her intuition and faith lie hidden and ready to feed her soul.

Normal birth is the woman who births in her own power, dignity, beauty, grace, and strength. It is the mother and this never-seen-before baby working it out together for the first time.

Normal birth is what I trust this mother can do, it is what I believe in, cherish, and humbly protect. It is the gift we give the mothers we serve and the gift they give their precious babies. It is the real-life miracle I witness again and again with an ever-growing sense of privilege and joy”

Lois Wilson, Midwife. Excerpt taken from Midwifery Today Magazine.

Committee Member Profile:



LISA
DEVENNEY

Joined HAS: I returned to Sydney in March of this year after living overseas for 13 years. I was pregnant with my second child and nervous that I wouldn't be 'allowed' to have a homebirth. Thankfully a friend recommended HAS as a way to find a midwife and further info on homebirth in Australia. My midwife, Jo Hunter, and I met via skype before our first 'real' meeting when I was 31 weeks pregnant and Tallulah was born at home 7 weeks later, into a loving, private and calm environment, just as I had hoped.

Family: Lives in Sydney with husband Kevin, Max 19 months and Tallulah 2 weeks

Life before birthing: Different person. After birthing feel like I'm looking at the world with new eyes. More grounded.

Why homebirth? I never considered any other way. Living in the UK when pregnant with my first child, homebirth is offered to everyone, so I didn't feel I was fighting a 'system' (as I felt recently when choosing homebirth in Sydney). I read up on the subject so that I was informed (and excited), but also so my husband was comfortable. Possibly influenced by knowledge that my Mum homebirthed in the Blue Mountains in the 60s.

New and Renewed Members

HAS would like to thank the following new and renewed Members for their support:

Caroline Connolly
Evelyn Dwyer
Elizabeth Caruana
Jewels Murray
Brooke Osbourne
Rachel Prest
Kathy Johnson
Jacquie Harsh
Rebekkah Moyle
Clare Colman
Lorelei Barkley
Tanya Karlychuk
Molly Ross
Jacqui McNamara
Amy Carr
Samantha Corrie
Karen Houghton
Wendy Mackay
Tatiana Schild
Nerissa Parker
Olivia Solomon
Lauri Jones
Fiona Lackingher
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Kate Clark
Naomi Homel
Ana Biffin
Amar Wehbe
Jane Ainsworth
Jane Palmer
Alyssea Kemp
Kate Swincer
Nicole Rumble-
Kellas
Shirley Goldrei
Stephanie Stoddard
Michelle Cloete
Cherry Johnston
Sarah Haines
Lusi Austin
Rose Debelin
Eliza Wernick
Mandy Douglas
Ariana Reid





Workshops with

Jane Hardwicke Collings Midwife, Author of *Ten Moons - the Spiritual Journey of Pregnancy*

Exploring, Honouring, Celebrating & Healing Our Sacred Feminine Path

Moonsong

is a two day workshop for women from menarche onward, sitting together in a circle, reconnecting with feminine knowledge and remembering the wisdom of the cycles. Using the circle and the ever repeating cycle of menstruation, moon phases, life and Earth seasons, participants reconnect to a wisdom and inner knowing that forms the basis of the experience of being female. Practical information and creative and transformational processes over the weekend reconnect us to our inner wisdom and the magic that is the essence of female-ness - the blood mysteries, the spiritual practice of menstruation, the rites of passage of the menarche, childbirth, and menopause. Each woman receives a copy of *Herstory*, *Thirteen Moons* and *Spinning Wheels*.

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey

is a three day workshop for women - pregnant, planning to be pregnant, midwives and doulas. Using ritual and art to compliment information sharing we delve into understanding our fears and why we think and act the way we do. We explore the inner journey of pregnancy and come to know ourselves more fully through this process, preparing for birth and mothering from our most in-tune and empowered centre. We look deeply at the sexuality and spirituality of pregnancy, birth and mothering, learning meditation, tools for labour and beautiful rituals to perform to honour pregnancy, birth and mothering. We invoke the ancient Birth Goddesses as our foremothers did, for their guidance, nurturance, protection and support. We do what women have been doing together longer than we haven't – sit together in support of each other sharing our innate wisdom focussing on the beauty and strength of Mother. Each woman receives a copy of *Ten Moons*.

Contact me janecollings@bigpond.com if you would like to receive my seasonal newsletter.

To book for a workshop or for further information email me or phone 0408 035 808.

2011 workshops

Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

February 26, 27, 11am-7pm
Pregnancy + Parenting Wellbeing Centre
Baulkham Hills, Sydney
Teas catered, non-residential \$350
bookings: Tara Darlington
support@npsydney.com.au

Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

April 6, 7, 8, 2011
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Moonsong

April 9, 10, 2011
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$350 or \$250
per person for two family members

Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

April 27, 28, 29, 2011
Bellingen, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$550

Moonsong

April 30, May 1 2011
Bellingen, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential
\$400 or \$300 per person for two family
members.

Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

July 5, 6, 7, 2011
Oyster Cove, Hobart, Tasmania
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Moonsong

July 8, 9, 2011
Oyster Cove, Hobart, Tasmania
Fully catered, non-residential
\$350 or \$250 per person for two family members.

Moonsong

October 1, 2, 2011
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential
\$350 or \$250 per person for two family members

Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

October 5, 6, 7, 2011
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

November 9, 10, 11, 2011
Queensland TBA
Fully catered, non-residential \$550

Moonsong

November 12, 13, 2011
Queensland TBA
Fully catered, non-residential
\$400 or \$300 per person for two family members



Lotus birth

A Ritual for our Times

© Dr Sarah J. Buckley 2010 www.sarahbuckley.com

Previously published in *Lotus Birth* by Shivam Rachana (Yarra Glen, Australia: Greenwood Press, 2000).

For an in-depth exploration of the placenta and placental rituals, see "Jacob's Placenta" in *Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering: A Doctor's Guide to Natural Childbirth and Gentle Early Parenting Choices* (Sarah J Buckley MD, Celestial Arts, 2009).

Lotus birth is the practice of leaving the umbilical cord uncut, so that the baby remains attached to his/her placenta until the cord naturally separates at the umbilicus, exactly as a cut cord does, at three to ten days after birth. This prolonged contact can be seen as a time of transition, allowing the baby to slowly and gently let go of their attachment to the mother's body.

Although we have no written records of cultures that leave the cord uncut, many traditional peoples hold the placenta in high esteem. For example, Maori people from New Zealand bury the placenta ritually on the ancestral marae (meeting place) and the Hmong, a hill tribe from South East Asia, believe that the placenta must be retrieved after death to ensure physical integrity in the next life. A Hmong baby's placenta is buried inside the house of birth.

Lotus birth is a new ritual, having only been described in chimpanzees before 1974 when Clair Lotus Day, pregnant and living in California, began to question the routine cutting of the cord. Her searching led her to an obstetrician who was sympathetic to her wishes and her son Trimurti was born in hospital and taken home with his cord uncut. Lotus birth was named by, and seeded through, Clair to Jeannine Parvati Baker in the US and Shivam Rachana in Australia, who have both been strong advocates for this gentle practice.

Since 1974, many babies have been born this way, including babies born at home and in hospital, on land and in water, and even by caesarean section. Lotus birth is a beautiful and logical extension of natural childbirth, and invites us to reclaim the so-called third stage of birth for our babies, and ourselves and to honour the placenta; our babies' first source of nourishment.

Zoe's lotus birth

I have experienced Lotus birth with my second and subsequent children after being drawn to it during my second pregnancy through contact with Shivam Rachana at the Centre for Human Transformation (CHT) in Yarra Glen, near Melbourne. Lotus birth made sense to me at the time as I remembered my experiences in hospital obstetrics, and the strange and uncomfortable feeling of cutting through the gristly, fleshy cord that connects baby to placenta and mother. The feeling for me was like cutting through a boneless toe, and it felt good to avoid this cutting with my coming baby.

Through the CHT, I spoke with women who had chosen this for their babies, and experienced a beautiful post-natal time. Some women also described their Lotus-borne children's self-possession and completeness. Others described it as a challenge, practically and emotionally. Nicholas, my partner, was concerned that it might interfere with the magic of those early days but agreed to go along with my wishes.

Zoe, our second child, was born at home on the tenth of September 1993. Her placenta was, unusually, an oval shape, which was perfect for the red velvet placenta bag that I had sewn. Soon after the birth, we wrapped her placenta in a cloth nappy, then in the placenta bag, and bundled it up with her in a shawl that enveloped both of them. Every 24 hours, we attended to the placenta by patting it dry, coating it liberally with salt, and dropping a little lavender oil onto it. Emma, aged two, was keen to be involved in the care of her sister's placenta. As the days passed, Zoe's cord dried from the umbilical end, and became thin and brittle. It developed a convenient 90° kink where it threaded through her clothes and so did not rub or irritate her. The placenta also dried and shriveled due to our salt treatment, developing a meaty smell that interested our cat! Zoe's cord separated on the sixth day without any fuss. Other babies have cried inconsolably or held their cord tightly before separation. We planted her placenta under a mandarin tree on her first birthday, which our dear friend and neighbour Annie later dug up and put in a pot in her yard when we moved interstate. She told us later that the mandarins from the tree were the sweetest she had ever tasted.

Jacob's lotus birth

Our third child Jacob Patrick was born at home on the 25th September 1995, into water. Jacob and I stayed in the water for some time after the birth, so we floated his placenta in a plastic ice-cream tub (with the lid on, and a corner cut out for the cord) while I nursed him. This time, we put his placenta in a sieve to drain for the first day. I neither dressed nor carried Jacob at this time, but stayed physically in touch with him in a still space while Nicholas cared for Emma (four) and Zoe (two). His cord separated in just under four days, and I felt that he drank deeply of the stillness of that time.

His short "breaking forth" time was perfect, because my parents arrived from New Zealand the following day to help with our household. He later chose a Jacaranda tree under which to bury his placenta at our new home in Queensland.

Maia's Lotus Birth

My fourth baby, Maia Rose, was born in Brisbane, where lotus birth is still very new, on 26th July 2000. We had a beautiful do-it-yourself birth at home, and my intuition told me that her breaking forth time would be short. I decided not to treat her placenta at all, but kept it in a sieve over a bowl in the daytime and in our red velvet placenta bag at night.

Maia's cord separated in just under three days and, although it was a cool time of year, it did become friable and rather smelly. (Salt treatment would have prevented this.) Her placenta has been buried in our garden, with a rose bush planted on top. I broke off a piece of her dried cord, which had some amazing and beautiful twists, to keep for her.

Children remember

My older children have blessed me with stories of their experiences in pregnancy and birth, and have been unanimously in favour of not cutting the cord, especially Emma who remembered the unpleasant feeling of having her cord cut (after it had stopped pulsating), which she describes as being "painful in my heart". Zoe, at five years of age, described being attached to a "love-heart thing" in my womb and told me "When I was born, the cord went off the love-heart thing and onto there [her placenta] and then I came out." Perhaps she remembers her placenta in utero as the source of nourishment and love.

Lotus birth has been, for us, an exquisite ritual that has enhanced the magic of the early post-natal days. I notice an integrity and self-possession with my lotus-born children, and I believe that lovingness, cohesion, attunement to Mother Nature, and trust and respect for the natural order have all been imprinted on our family by our honouring of the placenta, the Tree of Life.

'Sarah J. Buckley's book is hands-down and easily the best of all birthing books yet.'

Joseph Chilton Pearce, author of *Magical Parent Magical Child*



Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering
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My lovely long sleep in

MELODIE GLASS



On 29th November 2010 in the wee hours of the morning our little family gathered around our couch to welcome the newest member - Stella Eve. My husband, my mother, our three amazing midwives and her two-and-a-half-year-old sister were all present for the special event. Even though we were all elated and high on the experience, we all finally made it into bed together just after 4am as the last midwife said her goodbyes.

After having our first child at home in 2008, I was on such a high thanks to those amazing birth hormones and the thrill of achieving my birth plan. I felt like I could conquer the world and even walked my new baby to my pre natal yoga class to show my friends two days after the birth! Like any new mother I recall being so very exhausted and in hindsight I was just doing too much too fast! So with this pregnancy the first part of my birth plan was the postnatal period. I planned to stay in bed, or as close to it as possible, for two weeks.

So return to 29th November: 6.30am and despite being asleep for only two hours our toddler wakes up ready to start the day! With everybody, including the new baby, sleeping soundly I decided that I would rise with her- after all I was the one with the amazing birth hormones wasn't I! So my plan didn't really get off to the best start, but as soon as the others woke that was it... time to start my lovely long sleep in! It was marvellous and everything I imagined it would be. Food, drink, tea, presents, books, magazines, laptop were all delivered and removed at my request. For the first week I did rise and make it to the letterbox one afternoon. And by the second week I felt the need for a few PM outings. But every day for two weeks I did not get out of bed until midday- bliss! The most wonderful part of my lovely long sleep in was the time I spent 'drinking in' our new little girl. Furthermore the sleep in offered my older little girl time to roll around with us- to cuddle, breastfeed and play with her new sister. My lovely long sleep in was exactly what I needed to step into the role of mother-of-two. When the time came, I felt rested and ready to face the fun and business of everyday life with two tots.



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'the joy of babywearing'

The Postnatal Doula

Supporting Fourth Stage

RENEE ADAIR

I got a phone call from a client on a Saturday afternoon while at a café with my partner recently - an inconsolable new mummy on the other end. "I didn't think it was going to be so hard, I'm so tired and overwhelmed, he is not sleeping, so I'm not sleeping..." Crying, feeling helpless and with a rumble of guilt in her voice, she states "I even thought about chucking him out the window last night!" Listening to her for the next thirty minutes, I validated her feelings and thoughts, I offered words of encouragement, gave her permission to howl and made sure she had support that evening. We soon had a good laugh and she felt more able to get on with the job of parenting, feeling somewhat lighter.

I had seen this new mummy twice since the birth and we had had lots of phone contact. She had had a great birth experience, but like so many women today, was finding the immediate post partum period extremely challenging.

I believe that the fourth stage or postnatal period is from birth to six weeks - makes sense to me from a physical, mental and physiological point of view, for both mother and child. And traditionally in our culture, this time has unfortunately gained a negative and difficult cogitation. A lot of us don't have family close by and partners often don't get to spend more than a couple of weeks at home post the birth.

The role of the doula is as individual as her clients, both during the labour and post the birth. Of course there are guidelines, but essentially our main aim is to build confidence by mothering the mother... so that women can birth their babies with strength and courage, and in the postnatal phase we can make the transition into parenthood a little simpler and more enjoyable.

The role of the postnatal doula begins the moment the bubba is born and is placed on mum's chest - Holding the space for the new mother and partner to see, hear, touch and smell their baby; slowing down the sometimes-rushed process in a hospital of weighing and dressing the baby; and at home, working in conjunction with the midwife to welcome the baby slowly and allow him or her to unfold.

Postnatal visits from your doula can occur at any time post the birth and there is flexibility here according to how the birth has been and if there is extended family support or not. And doula support can last any where from a couple of visits to regular visits two to three times a week for up to two to three months.

Repeated studies undertaken in the US - Klaus, Kennel and Klaus, have shown that by hiring a post natal doula women experience the following:

- Improved breastfeeding outcomes
- Decreased incidence of postpartum depression
- Greater maternal satisfaction
- Better mother-infant interaction/bonding

A post natal doula may offer a list of services with essentially the main aim to enable the mother and/or parents to readjust to, and enjoy and concentrate on their new baby.

- Be a sounding board for fears and feelings
- Do light house duties
- Offer breast/bottle feeding information and support
- Offer placental encapsulation
- Offer cups of tea
- Be 'on call' by phone 24hr/7 for a designated time post the birth
- Have a list of relevant resources and refer on when needed
- Educate and assist siblings
- Create a support/food roster if wanted or needed
- Refer mum/parents to a post natal support group
- Build self confidence
- Prepare or bring a meal
- Share strategies
- Share sleep and settling skills

And the list can go on.

Post natal doulas vary from nannies in that a doula will focus more on the mother and other immediate family, allowing the mother to nurture her own baby. A nanny service would take the baby and tend to it. We treat the family as a unit and praise all involved; we share relevant information and validate feelings from a non-judgmental place.

The postnatal period is one that needs to be honored more in our culture. Traditionally, for centuries women supporting other women in the post natal period, meant that they could concentrate on learning the rhythm of their new baby and gain their strength to move into motherhood post the birth with confidence and joy.

We need to remember women are soft, vulnerable and often overwhelmed at this time.

According to Beyond Blue, post natal depression figures in Australia now hovers around 16%. That is a big number! There are many varied reasons for this, including unexpected labour and birth experiences and outcomes, the fact that our society has complicated breastfeeding (like we have labour and birth), and a lack of post natal support. Many mothers feel isolated and partners feel inadequate to support their wives/partners at this time of great change.

Having a postnatal doula to help facilitate a smoother transition into parenthood is a great idea! Let's be gentle with our new mums and mother them so they can nurture and mother their new baby.

Support is unconditional. It is listening... not judging, not telling your own story. Support is not offering advice... it is offering a handkerchief, a touch, a hug...caring. We are here to help women discover what they are feeling... not to make the feelings go away. We are here to help a woman identify her options... not to tell her which options to choose. We are here to discuss steps with a woman... not to take the steps for her. We are here to help a woman discover her own strength... not to rescue her and leave her still vulnerable. We are here to help a woman discover she can help herself... not to take that responsibility for her. We are here to help a woman learn to choose... not to make it unnecessary for her to make difficult choices. -Anonymous



Australian Doula College
In honour of women, for the love of birth

EDUCATE, LOVE, SUPPORT, NURTURE

The Australian Doula College (ADC) is an independent childbirth and parenting education centre, which provides support, education, and continuity of care for women and their families during pregnancy, childbirth and beyond.

We take a holistic approach to pregnancy and birth and to our Doula Training and view pregnancy and birth as a normal physiological event.

We deliver, under a training partnership with Re:Viva First Aid and Resuscitation, **the only nationally accredited Doula Training in Australia**: Certificate IV in Doula Support Services (NTIS code 91494NSW). Now available face to face in VIC, QLD, NSW and this year SA! Correspondence can be started anytime!

We will support and empower you on your amazing journey, whether you want to be a doula or are an expectant parent, however that journey unfolds for you.



**ADC Head Office: 422 Marrickville Road,
Marrickville NSW 2204
Phone 02 9569 8020 or 1300 139 507
www.australiandoulacollege.com.au**

Wrapped in the

Hormone of Love

JENNY CARLETON

Homebirth mothers have the strongest opportunity to bond with their babies. Oxytocin, the 'hormone of love', brings joy to our parenting journey, during conception, birth, bonding, breastfeeding and beyond. But, as explained by Dr Michel Odent, it is a shy hormone. It will only be released if the conditions are right.

Oxytocin is released most commonly during lovemaking. "Soon after the birth, when the physiological processes are not disturbed, mothers have the capacity to reach a very high peak of oxytocin. This is possible (in a warm place) if the mother, who is still 'on another planet', is not distracted at all and has nothing else to do except to feel the contact with her baby's skin, to look into her baby's eyes, and to smell her baby's body." (Michel Odent) Such tender touch, holding and eye contact simultaneously floods the baby's body with oxytocin, which they also receive in breast milk. An instantaneous and deep bond is formed between mother and child which can be reinforced throughout the day through breastfeeding and baby wearing. The decision to homebirth increases the likelihood that the full benefits of oxytocin will be experienced.

The mother baby connection continues following birth through baby wearing. "Babies are genetically programmed to want to be close to you, and preferably, in direct physical contact with you for much of the day. Researchers have verified that when they are carried on their parents' bodies for much of the day, babies tend to cry a lot less, seem to enjoy themselves a lot more and are noticeably more peaceful. Babies love quietly watching the world go by while feeling the warmth of your body, your rhythmic breathing and heartbeat right against them." (Robin Grille, Heart to Heart Parenting)

I bought my first sling when I was pregnant with my first child. Like many novices I didn't know if it was well designed or how to use it; I didn't know that there were other styles and models available and I didn't know any other baby wearers. After our hospital birth, I tried my newborn in the sling a few times and it failed to make either of us comfortable. Like many others without support, I promptly shelved it. I held my baby in my arms or pushed her in a pram as I struggled with the tasks of newborn baby care. Fortunately, I rediscovered baby wearing when my daughter was 18 months old and wore her until she was four and I was six months pregnant. We loved this time together—her snuggling on my back, falling asleep or chatting about the world around her.

Before my second child was born I gave away my pram, which had been gathering dust, and expanded my stash of slings. With a better understanding of the benefits of baby wearing, I now know that many of my daily struggles could have been lessened or eliminated if I had worn my baby on my body. This applies to newborns, toddlers and preschoolers. See the table on page 15 for a description of life with and without carriers.

Why carry your baby?

- "It's convenient. You can breastfeed discretely in a sling while working, getting things done around the house, shopping or eating in a restaurant. If you have a

This article has been reproduced and updated with permission from Birthings Issue 99, Spring 2008.

baby who wants to be held all the time, this is an easy way to meet her needs while doing other things.

- It helps mums care for older siblings.
- It helps some babies to breastfeed better. Some babies, particularly those who are tense or tend to arch their backs, breastfeed better while moving. Also, babies who are slow to gain weight (for no apparent reason) have been known to gain better if carried in a sling for several hours a day.
- It reduces crying and colic. Babies are happier because they have less need to cry, and parents enjoy their babies more as a result.
- It enhances learning. Carried babies have enhanced visual and auditory alertness, and increased "quiet alertness" times. Carrying a baby promotes cognitive development and speech development, since babies are exposed to more experiences and conversations.
- Carried babies are involved in their parents' world. They participate in life, rather than see it as a spectator.
- Carrying your baby promotes bonding and enhances parents' feelings of competence. A higher frequency of feeding and touching stimulates mothering hormones, and frequent carrying encourages and speeds the development of a mutual reading of each other's cues."

(Source: <http://www.kellymom.com/parenting/sling.html#advantages>)

Carrier safety – what to avoid & what to look for

Interestingly, the baby carriers that are the least safe are the ones that bring the least physical connection between baby and wearer and are the least comfortable. (The closer the child is to the wearer's body, the more comfortable the carrier.) Unfortunately they are also the most readily available.

Some carriers are poorly designed and pose a suffocation risk (eg. 'bag' slings) or overload the child's spine and neck (eg. parachute harness soft structured carriers).



Unsafe carrier – 'Bag' sling

(Source: M'Liss Stelzer, baby wearing educator & former registered nurse; www.babyslingsafety.blogspot.com)

Avoid 'Bag' slings.

'Bag' slings can place an infant at risk of respiratory distress, oxygen deprivation or even suffocation because:

1. They curl the baby's chin into her/his chest, compressing windpipe
2. They do not prevent the baby's head from rotating and pressing against the side of the carrier
3. The depth of the carrier, the gathered edges and the thick fabric mean the wearer cannot see or feel the child and so detect infant distress.

Avoid 'Parachute harness' Soft Structured Carriers

'Parachute harness' soft structured carriers are the easiest of all carriers to

use, however they “position the infant upright, with the legs hanging down and the bodyweight supported at the base of the baby’s spine (i.e. at the crotch), it puts undue stress on the spine which can adversely affect the development of the spinal curves and, in some cases, cause spondylolisthesis” and/or a whiplash type injury.



Unsafe carrier – ‘Parachute harness’ soft structured carriers

[or held vertically with correct hip positioning and spinal/head support, as in a wrap].

• When a baby wants to be more upright to see the world around him (usually around age 4 to 5 months), the carrier should allow him to sit cross-legged [or in the ‘frog-leg position’], so his weight is dissipated through his legs and hips, as opposed to the style that has the legs hanging down, where the young spine has to bear the entire weight.

*An infant’s spine should only be in a weight bearing position when they can bear their own weight unaided, ie. When they can sit on their own. So don’t prop your baby up in a pram either!

(Source: <http://www.continuum-concept.org/reading/spinalStress.html>).

The carrier pictured shows the baby’s legs dangling down. While recent models are designed with back support for the wearer, they still place most of the load on the upper back, which is exactly where you don’t want it!



Newborns naturally adopt the ‘frog leg position’, which you copy in a carrier



When carrying a child in an upright position, the knees must be higher than the bottom

Choosing a carrier

1. “What is your child/baby’s age?
2. How much do you want to spend?
3. What do you want to do while your child is in the carrier?
Are you planning on using your carrier to get the housework done or cook dinner? Do you want to use it when out shopping? For family weekend walks? Do you want a carrier that fits all of the above?
4. What length of time do you want to carry the baby for?
5. Will you be sharing the carrier with others? Is it possible to adjust the

carrier for a custom fit?

6. What is the weather like in your area?
7. What kind of learning curve are you looking for? Will you have help to learn to use your carrier?
8. Will you be breastfeeding in the carrier?
9. How easy should it be to take the carrier off without waking the baby?
10. Do you want a carrier with you at all times? Does it need to be compact and portable?”

(Source: <http://www.carryingaway.com.au/category-s/171.htm>)

Types of Carrier

All good carriers can be used from newborn to preschooler. They can be worn on the front, hip or back and are suitable for a broad range of activities (housework, cooking dinner, shopping, bushwalking etc.). However some carriers are more suitable than others for each activity and age.

Different carriers place the weight of the child on different parts of our body—talk to an experienced baby wearer to find out which style is best for you. For those with a newborn I recommend a Pouch (one-shoulder) and a Stretch Wrap (two-shoulder). If you receive a second-hand stretch wrap ensure it is not too stretchy, as these carriers tend to lose their effectiveness over multiple babies.

One-shoulder carriers

One-shoulder carriers cradle small babies in a reclining position (on your front or back) or can be used to hold an older child upright on your front, hip or back.

- Pouch (some brands: Earthsling, Hot Slings, Peanut Shell)
- Ring Sling—unpadded (some brands: Ellaroo, TaylorMade)



Pouch (no clip or ring)



Ring Sling

Two-shoulder carriers

Two-shoulder carriers hold children in an upright position. As they distribute the weight over two shoulders, they are better suited for carrying for longer periods of time for older babies/toddlers/preschoolers.

Woven wraps, while a little trickier to master, are fantastic for back wearing (at any age), as your child’s head is high on your back, behind your shoulders. This allows your toddler/preschooler to chat with you, which is far more stimulating for everyone involved, compared to the lack of communication possible between mother and pram-bound child.

- Stretch Wrap 0-6mths, front only (some brands: Hug-A-Bub, Moby)
- Woven Wrap 0-5yrs (some brands: Ellaroo, Storchenwiege)
- Mei Tai (some brands: ABA, Kozy Carrier, CatBird Baby)
- Non-parachute Soft Structured Carriers (some brands: Ergo, Patapum, Pikkilo)



Stretch Wrap



Woven Wrap



Mei Tai



Soft Structured carriers

My experiences of non-baby wearing compared to baby wearing

Activity	Pram or Holding (first baby)	Baby Wearing (second baby)
Pregnancy	--	Wore 4 year old on my back until I was 6 months pregnant
Birth	Hospital	Home
Breastfeeding	Lengthy feeding sessions on the couch	Lengthy feeding sessions wherever I happen to be (on the train, shopping...) with bub in a POUCH SLING (as an older baby/toddler I feed in a WOVEN WRAP)
Stimulation	Take 6 week old to the NO WAR rally with 100 000 other concerned citizens, propped up on her dad's shoulder or in a pram – total over stimulation	First 4 weeks of life bub is either in the house or, if out, in a RING SLING with the 'tail' covering him
Evenings	2 hours or more of crying; dread dusk as exhausting evening lies ahead	Early evening: Bub asleep in POUCH sling whilst family eats dinner together Later: wakes for feed then quiet alert time with dad before going to bed with mum
Cooking	Attempts to butter toast with one hand whilst holding newborn with the other; wait for partner to get home to eat more nourishing meal	Prepare dinner for the family with newborn asleep in a POUCH SLING (as an older baby/toddler I back wear with a two-shoulder carrier)
Walking (shopping, public transport)	Visit only 2 local shops with bub in pram before she starts crying, carry her home whilst pushing pram	Go out for hours with bub in a RING SLING. Walk, train or bus with shopping in a funky pull along trolley (a TWO-SHOULDER carrier is more comfortable for extended wearing with a heavier child)
Errands (in and out of the car)	Get pram in and out of car. Struggle to get bub back in car seat as she feels she is being shunted from place to place	Pop bub in RING SLING or POUCH (quick & easy). He is happy to hop in and out of car for multiple stops as he is having fun and cuddles in between
Sleep	Put bub to sleep in bed each day as she doesn't sleep easily in the pram and wakes when transferred from the car seat, therefore can't travel far from home	Bub breastfeeds and sleeps in carrier wherever I happen to be – unlimited freedom Newborn in a POUCH SLING Infant in a RING SLING Toddler/preschooler in a WOVEN WRAP
Teething/sick days at home	Hold bub in arms whilst struggling to do basic tasks like go to the loo or eat	Wear bub in a RING SLING as sick kids can't make up their mind if they want up or down or throw up or nappy change or breastfeed or sleep or...
Hanging out laundry	Hang washing as quickly as possible before bub starts crying in her bouncer nearby	Enjoy the garden whilst hanging washing with bub asleep or awake in a two-shoulder carrier (MEI TAI or WRAP), which allows me to raise my arms above my head (a Pouch or Ring Sling are fine when bub is small/less heavy)
Housework	Get very little done as bub cries in bouncer or toddler wants to be held	Wear bub on back in a TWO-SHOULDER carrier and get on with it!

Baby wearing support & buying a carrier

Despite their flaws, parachute harness carriers are the most popular and readily available, as they are simple to use and inexperienced baby wearers would be unaware of their poor design. Most safe carriers take time and practice to master. People often abandon them as they find 'my baby didn't like it' or 'it was uncomfortable', but this was simply because they were using it incorrectly or it was not the correct style or size for them.

So what's the solution? Get support!

Online support

Baby Carriers Downunder (www.baby-carriers-downunder.com - select Forum from the menu) is a national support group through which you can:

1. meet other babywearing parents online and locally for support
2. get advice choosing the best baby carrier for your needs (and where to buy them)
3. try out different carriers before you buy through the national Carrier Loaners Program
4. get help with using a baby carrier correctly and comfortably.

In-real-life support

To find other baby wearers, join an attachment parenting, homebirth or Australian Breastfeeding Association support group. Natural Parenting in Sydney: a guide to services & products (www.npsydny.com.au), has more information on carrying your baby and lists support groups, online carrier suppliers and suppliers of breastfeeding tops (the 'lift the flap style' make breastfeeding in a sling easy).

Recommended supplier

Frangipani Baby (www.frangipanibaby.com.au), a Blue Mountains home based business, has an excellent range of carriers.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to talk through the best carrier for your specific needs.

My baby is now four (and 18 kgs) but he still rides on by back as we go about our day and enjoys the intimacy and conversation that carrying enables. I hope baby wearing can bring you the same joy.

Email Jenny at admin@homebirthsydney.org.au

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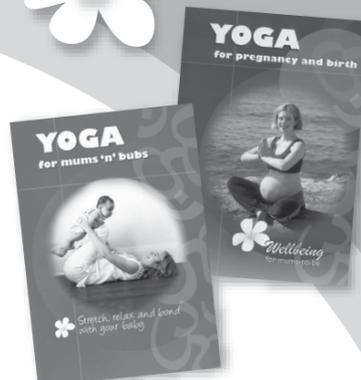
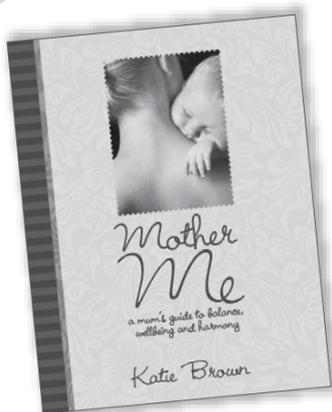
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BY KATIE BROWN

Mum-of-three, Katie Brown is one of Australia's most respected pre & post-natal yoga teachers. She is a certified infant massage instructor, baby yoga teacher, massage therapist, doula & author. She holds yoga classes and workshops in Sydney.



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From the Darkness

Into the Light

KIM
RYDER



If someone had sat me down and told me that the days and weeks following the birth of my baby were going to be harder than giving birth to a 4210gm baby at home, drug-free, I'd have told them they were crazy and sent them on their way!

I weighed forty nine kilos before I fell pregnant, and put on a whopping seventeen kilos, which was all baby. You couldn't tell I was pregnant from behind. I had a great pregnancy besides the usual morning sickness and some lower back pain. We were all astounded by the amount of movement my ever-growing baby made, but given her size, I'd say she was a little cramped in there to say the least!

I was exhausted by the labour, and spent the next day in bed, watching my beautiful baby girl. That evening, however, things went pear-shaped. My ribs on my right side were bruised, assumedly from Treya kicking her way out. It was impossible to get comfortable, and I was desperate for sleep having been awake, for the most part, for coming up to forty eight hours. It's like my body went into shock after such physical exertion. My stomach hurt....I could barely walk....my ribs ached....and I just lost it! I couldn't even pick up my own baby, and when I tried to, I made her cry! I didn't know if I had hurt her, if we'd put the nappy on wrong, or if I'd accidentally pulled on her umbilical cord tie. I literally started to unravel emotionally, and we had to call on my partner's mum to come stay the night - two, in fact.

Even getting to the toilet was an ordeal. I had to be assisted, and still was unable to hold Treya. Attempting to feed her was a nightmare, trying to stack pieces of foam and pillows in a manner that held her off my stomach, whilst my nipples just weren't coming to the party, sitting flatter and flatter the more engorged my breasts became.

By day three, I was in so much pain, having to hold my stomach when I walked, and crying with exhaustion, raw emotion and a growing sense of helplessness and uselessness. When I tried to sleep, I would have nightmares, plagued by thoughts of accidentally dropping my baby, and tormented by the fact that if anything happened to her, I might never recover.

Thankfully my herbalist ordered me into a hot bath with thirty drops of lavender in it, which bought me some relief. Then my partner Karl's sister came to the rescue with a "Mother Roasting" pack, consisting of a selection of herbs

in which to soak in the bath, followed by some soothing essential oils in warmed jojoba oil for my tummy, which we then wrapped firmly with a hemp scarf. Apparently there was a look of utter relief on my face after my tummy was wrapped up... but that was not before having to surrender to my father-in-law having to get me out of the bath, dry me and put on a maternity pad for me!!!! Eeek! I could do little for myself and holding my baby was still near impossible. My story is long, and some of it is vague in my mind, which probably isn't a bad thing. But I do remember crying a lot, being so devastated by the fact that I still couldn't look after my own baby. There was nothing medically wrong - I assume the physical pain was just from the physical exertion demanded by birthing a large baby - the emotional pain a combination of adrenal stress and what we now know to be post natal depression (PND).

I am pleased to say that there were eventually small joys appearing ever so slowly in my world. Mastering breastfeeding, with the help of a lactation consultant and nipple shields, after starving Treya for five days, was certainly one to be celebrated! My diary entry, made twenty days after the birth, rejoices in the fact that I was able to carry her to the change table and hold her for a while. I was devastated by the fact that I was physically unable to care for my baby and immensely grateful for the presence of my amazing partner and family who literally had to come and help us daily. Karl turned into Super Dad overnight, having to look after both his girls. My mind talk was negative, we needed visitors to help out, which conflicted with our decision to attempt an unofficial baby-moon, and I felt useless for just about the first time in my life. I found myself unable to do anything with the immense love I felt for this newly arrived being. I could feed her, breathe in the smell that was her and delight in the love that she evoked in me, yet I couldn't pick her up, carry her, bath her or anything.

Weeks passed, and we continued to adapt and make small steps forward. I used the pram, for example, to wheel her to the change table where I could then lift her up. I also lost my fear of dropping her. However, challenges kept appearing. I had mastitis off and on for two to three weeks; an old work injury in my neck produced a 6 day head ache that drove me to tears; I began crying almost daily; my scoliosis caused me back pain; and I began grieving for my beautiful Mamma who had died three years and two days prior to Treya's arrival, whom I missed so, so terribly... and the unravelling continued.

When the local early childhood nurse said to me "If you are still crying in a

few days, I think you should go on anti-depressants", I think I almost laughed! Me, needing anti-depressants? Don't be ridiculous! But I did continue to cry daily, and anxiety attacks were added to the mix as soon as Karl went back to work at the seven week mark. The darkness that was creeping in around the edges began to cast larger and larger shadows for longer and longer periods. A sense of disconnect developed and I could no longer force a smile even for my beautiful man. I found myself confessing that "This mothering business is mind numbingly boring" and wondering how I could get back to work! This was NOT what I had imagined feeling. In fact, I thought I'd take to mothering like a duck to water, and even went as far as assuming that I would adopt a rather relaxed "do-it-with-my-eyes-closed" earth-mother vibe about me!

The universe had other plans for us however. One morning I woke up, and even I was worried about myself. I felt numb, like I was just going through the motions, thinking about all those woman I know who just LOVED breastfeeding and motherhood, realising that I was not one of them. I knew that I loved my baby, but I experienced total emotional disconnection and a deepening numbness, and everything just became too hard. I tormented myself with the question "Am I just a bad Mum who can't be bothered or do I have PND?" I'd be holding her, watching her, spellbound by how beautiful she was...but at the same time, feeling absolutely nothing. Empty. Numb. Dark. Hopeless. Useless. And so so SAD.

Fortunately, asking for help is something I do well, and I have an amazing support network. I ran my feelings by my friend who had undiagnosed PND twelve years ago. The similarities were undeniable. I made another call to a friend who is currently on anti-depressants for PND. Again, the parallels were obvious. It was such a relief to hear that I was not the only one who would happily give my baby to someone else to hold and who felt numb despite having given birth to a gorgeous little human being. I was not the only one who literally cried upon my baby and was going through the motions instead of feeling the "joys of motherhood" that we are lead to believe are the norm.

Once I knew what we were dealing with, I knew what to do. We could act, and do something to move me from the darkness into the light. But before any real action was taken, I hit rock bottom, enduring several horrendous mornings where I was tormented by anxiety attacks that began the moment Karl left for work at 5am. Every time I awoke from that point, which was multiple times an hour having imagined hearing my baby crying over and over again, I'd be overwhelmed by a wave of anxiety that would eventually drive me to tears and out of bed. I then could not bear to be alone and, in utter despair, would have to call Karl's mum to come be with me until the light of day. One of the mornings she just lay with me in bed, holding me whilst I sobbed and missed my own beautiful mamma. Eventually we bundled me and Treya in the car and drove to our herbalist, hoping for an emergency appointment – and it was an emergency! By this stage I was considering what mental health hospitals I could check myself into and fantasising about anti-depressants.

Thankfully my diagnosis was good – "hormonal" apparently. A concoction of herbs were administered, along with instructions to drink a cup of miso soup and one to two glasses of Bonsoy (soy milk) a day, of all things! In addition to this, I was instructed to expose myself to the sun for an hour a day, rub fennel essential oil into my chest where my pituitary gland is, as well as my breasts and ovaries. To this, after consulting my GP, we added exercise, "time out" and "not practicing anxiety." The latter being getting out of bed when the anxiety hit, and doing anything (washing cloth nappies!!!) to distract my attention from it, even if it was 5am. And finally, I also took placenta pills made up for me by my midwife Sonja.

I have to say that whilst we waited for my unconventional medicine to start working, I had moments of desperation. If someone had offered me anti depressants there and then, I think I'd have taken them. But my herbalist reassured me and begged me to just hold on until day three or four, when the herbs were

said to take effect. To her credit, she was correct, and a few rays of sunshine shone in my world on day three. I continued to improve, and I still remember my first day of really enjoying my baby, when the loving, meaningless banter between mother and baby during otherwise mundane tasks, such as nappy changing, came easily; and for the first time, it was a joy to be Treya's mamma.

Fourteen weeks on, without as much as a wiff of an anti-depressant, I can honestly say that I am enjoying being a mum. The PND is still there, lingering in the background, but as long as I am vigilant and supported, we manage to keep it at bay. And I say "we" intentionally as my recovery has really been a community effort, brought about by the amazing support of family and close friends, without whom we would not have ventured so swiftly back into the light.

When I reflect on the challenges we have had since Treya's arrival, it's no wonder I ended up with PND, but part of me wonders whether the journey would have been easier had PND and physical, post-birth challenges been talked about more. It seems women are generally so quick to share birthing stories, and yet so reluctant to talk openly about the challenges of the fourth stage. So if someone sits you down before the birth of your child, and suggests that the weeks following the birth could be harder than the birth itself, don't tell them they are crazy! Make them a cup of tea, pull up a chair and hear them out, not because my challenges will happen to you, but simply because they could.



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Giving and Volunteering to Save Lives of

Mothers and Babies

In Poverty

If you think homebirth is in a dire position in Australia right now (and I agree), consider the situation of the 60 million women each year birthing in traditional, often unsanitary settings. Many birth with no assistance and no access to education or accurate information about birth. Others birth with a traditional birthing assistant, who may not have any suitable training, and who may harm or mutilate them.

The World Health Organisation estimates that 525,000 women die annually in childbirth, 99% of them in developing countries. For every woman who dies in childbirth, another 30 women incur injuries and infections, many of which are painful, disabling, stigmatising and permanent. That's almost 16 million women (3/4 of the entire population of Australia) damaged yearly for lack of adequate care, information and sanitary equipment with which to birth.

This information comes from the website of an organisation on our doorstep which is trying to improve the situation for these women by supplying clean birth kits. And you can help.

Before I tell you how to help, let me tell you how I know. Giving One Percent is a new not-for-profit established to support a culture of giving among Australians. We advocate individuals giving a substantial amount of money every year to charity, from one percent of your income; those who earn more can give more. We provide tools to help you make the decisions involved in giving intelligently:

- Our Giving Calculator calculates how much to give, making seven suggestions based on the international benchmarks in our Giving Guide, so you can decide on an amount appropriate for a family like yours
- Our Charity Chooser allows you to browse or search our database of 95 charities working to eliminate poverty. Search by region or country of operations, theme of work (including maternal health, children, and a whole lot more), religious affiliation or secularity and the type of work they do (community development, disaster relief, volunteering abroad and child sponsorship).

We also provide lots of information on the most effective ways to give, and if you're still not convinced, on why to give.

Personally, I found giving birth to my two sons to be the most profound, powerful and moving experiences of my life. And giving a substantial annual amount from our family budget to save the lives of those born into poverty runs an honourable second.

Now, back to the birthing kits, and how you can help. Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia) accepts tax-deductible donations. They've signed ACFID's Code of Conduct (visit www.givingonepercent.org.au to learn more), and administer their finances extremely efficiently – 94% of funds goes to program expenditure and community education. This is largely because so much of their work is done by volunteers.

Again, you can help: Birthing Kit Foundation has Assembly Days, where volunteers gather to compile the 6 components of the Birthing Kit into press seal bags. This would be a perfect community partnership for the members of HAS, and I urge you all to consider volunteering on an Assembly Day, or organising your own. You'll spend a few hours in the company of like-minded women, chatting while you assemble birth kits to save lives of birthing women just like yourself, but living in extreme poverty. The kit you assembled might end up in any of 21 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific. I raise my hand to join the fun.

I also encourage you to visit Giving One Percent at www.givingonepercent.org.au and see for yourself the volunteer work we are doing to make giving easier for all Australians. We're just starting up, and we'd love you to be part of the cultural shift toward greater giving in Australia. Please 'like' us on Facebook, follow us on twitter and tweet about us, email your friends and family, especially during June, and encourage them all to make their tax-time giving easier and smarter, and their commitment to eliminating poverty deeper, by using the site.

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A way of life that all women knew inherently from their own birth.

As babies and children we watched our mothers and the women of our tribe facilitate transformation daily within community life – holding space for each other in Moonlodge, birthing their babies with instinct and knowing, honouring their Elders, attending to their rich spiritual practice and walking a way of wisdom, sovereignty and beauty in their expression of being a Woman.

At our time of Menarche we were honoured and initiated as women and welcomed to join the Motherline, ready to receive into our own hearts, the ancient ancestral women's wisdom of all those who had walked before us. As we lived our lives through Mother, Maga and Crone, the voices of our Ancestors called to us often, whispering wisdoms of Knowing, Truth, Intuition, Psychic ability, Healing prowess and the Midwifery that comes from being a Shamaness who walks between the worlds.

Whilst the time we live in now is different, the women's hearts and bodies we bring to this life are still the same perfect, precious instruments finely tuned to hear and receive the wisdom of our Ancestry as it calls.

The opportunity to find our way back to the Motherline is always there. We are the sacred vessels we have always been.

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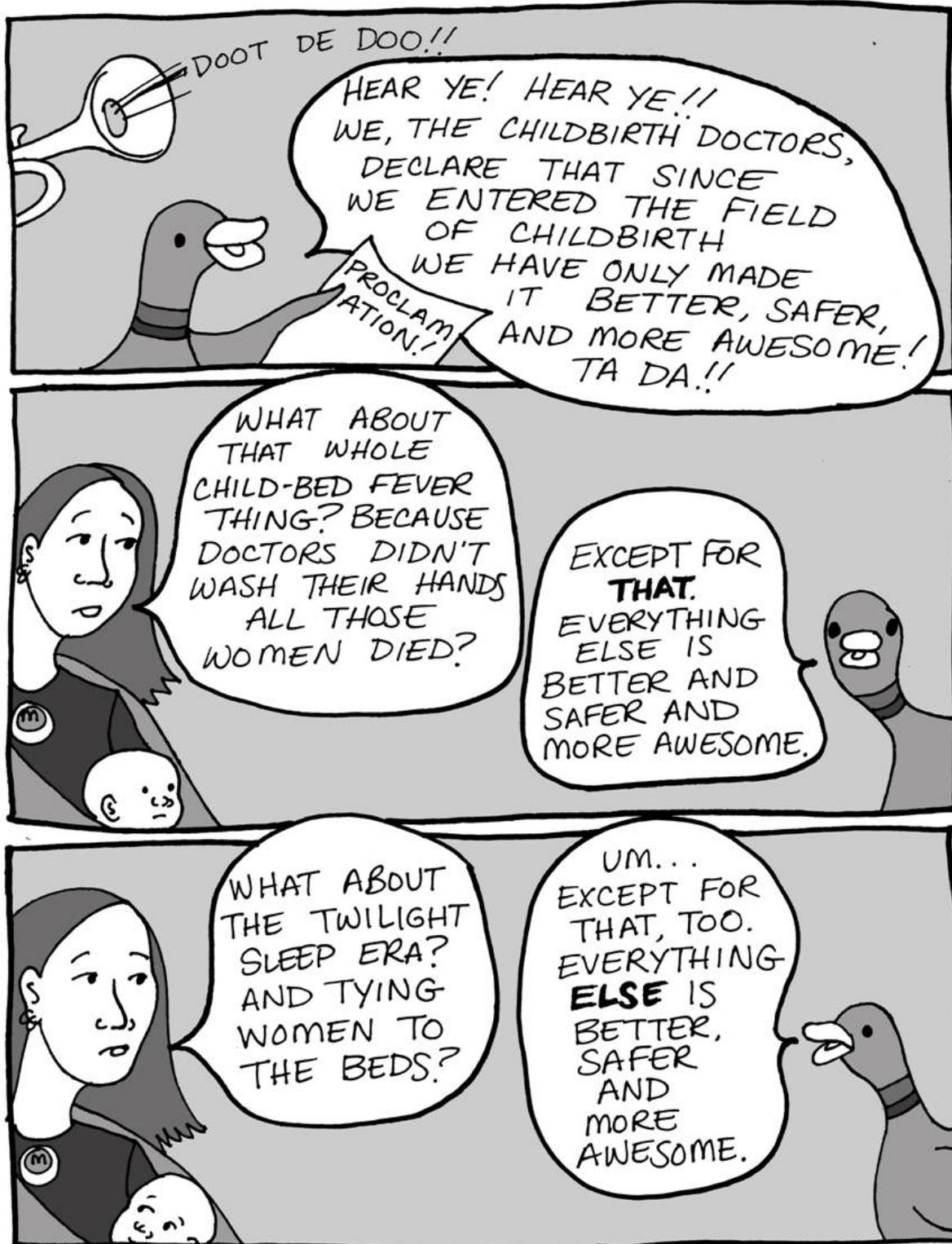
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for more information and registrations go to
WWW.SCHOOLOFSHAMANICMIDWIFERY.COM

Mama Is...

More Awesome



CONTINUED

Heather Cushman-Dowdee, long time creator of the comic "Hathor the Cowgoddess", is now creating all new comics over at www.mama-is.com. Heather is married to Kevin and is a homebirther, attachment parenter to 3 unschooled girls and a baby boy, and breastfeeding lactivist which inspires her cartoon creations.



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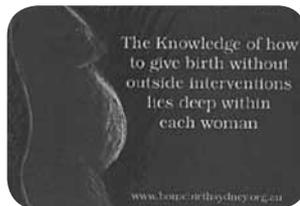
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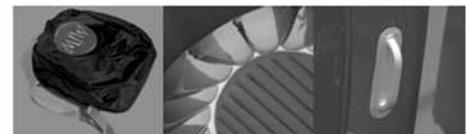
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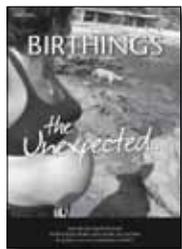


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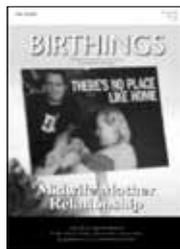
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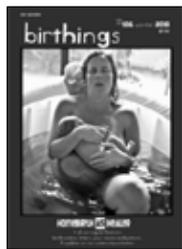
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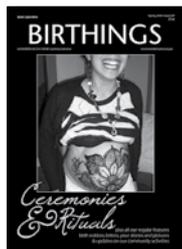
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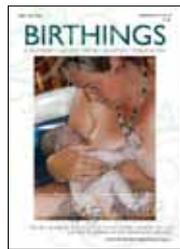
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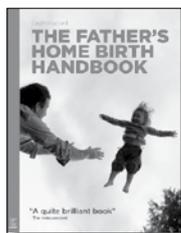


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Leah Hazard
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David Vernon
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challenges and joys of childbirth. Each
of these women discovered the value of
being able to make informed decisions
about their maternity care and with the
right care, had positive and empowering
birth experiences. Aust 2005
012BK \$24.95



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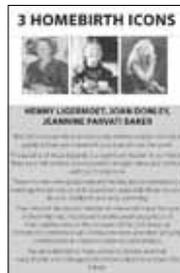


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A unique guide to pregnancy and birth.
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A beautifully illustrated children's book,
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and fearless about maintaining a stand
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Chrissy Butler
This unique picture book is printed
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breastfeeding through joyful artwork
and the whimsical musings of a
breastfed toddler. \$20.00

Jackie's Birth

PATRICIA TWAALFHOVEN

Before

What a total surprise and an absolute miracle ... :
We are pregnant – completely 'out of nothing' ... !!

Who would have thought this possible –
after a 10 year story, including miscarriage, IVF,
and the last 5 years waiting to adopt from Ethiopia.



During

Friday 8 April:

Around 9am the contractions started to be more serious; and they were closely monitored ...!

At 6pm Jackie Annabel's first scream was loud and clear, even though she was not fully born yet!

The 'stats': 3,020 grams and 51 cm.

Time to sleep ...



After



The first priority is to recover and simply enjoy...



Robyn (midwife) comes every day for the first few days to see how we are all going.



A clean belly button!



A first bath ..



The intro to the ocean down at Dee Why beach ..



A first smile (!?)

Maya's Birth

KIM
MCNAMARA



For a long time, I was fearful of pregnancy and parenthood. I knew I wanted a child, but I had reservations. I was scared of getting a big belly, of morning sickness, my breasts getting bigger, of mother's group(!), of the pain of labour ... the list was long. But I read about it and found out about home birth, and realised that, having toured some local hospitals, this was an option that really appealed to me. I also realised that going to hospital would make me more vulnerable to intervention during labour. I didn't want that. I wanted to go for a natural birth, and it seemed that by going to hospital my chances of achieving that were diminished.

So, I did some research. I called a couple of private midwives and asked them questions. Our flat was small – was it too small? Was it OK seeing as this was my first baby? Was I too old at 35? All the homebirth midwives I spoke to said it would be fine. After speaking to a few, I found a midwife in our area, Sheryl [Sidery]. We met up and she was lovely. She told us that the birth, though obviously important to prepare for, was just one day. The really important part was the rest of our child's life and our relationship with him/her. This was such an eye opener for me. As a teenager and a young woman, my expectations of pregnancy never really extended beyond which hospital you were meant to go to. She also helped me realise that the birth day itself was the culmination of two things: mental preparation - talking through all your fears and reservations and putting them to one side; and physical control of your body - which I worked on with pilates, yoga and lots of walks. February 14, my EDD, came and went. Donald and I were enjoying time together – going to the movies, out to lunch, and so on. Another week went past and, despite visits to the acupuncturist, nothing. Suddenly I was ten days overdue and each time I went back to the acupuncturist he asked: "Still no baby!?" He would look disappointed and send me packing with more Chinese herbs to cook up and drink. If I had been going to hospital and

seeing an obstetrician, this would be the time when someone would have been telling me that I needed to get an induction. Instead, my midwife Sheryl sent me to get an ultrasound and it was all fine - baby still active and the placenta pumping away.

At the next appointment with Sheryl, the 26th, I was beginning to worry for the first time in months. At the end of the appointment Sheryl asked me if I wanted an internal examination, making it clear that I could refuse. I agreed and she found that I was already 2cm dilated. That gave me such a lift, and I left feeling confident and reassured. Sunday – nothing. I was feeling low, but still hopeful that this baby would make his or her way before too long. I decided to make some bagels, as I'd kept telling Sheryl and Daana that this was my pre-labour plan.

THEN, at 2.30am on Monday February 28, I was woken with some cramping that I hadn't felt before. It was mild, but still strong enough to make me notice that them. I started timing the contractions on a snazzy iPhone app - they were coming sporadically every seven to ten minutes. 6am rolled around, very quickly! I texted Sheryl who called me and we chatted sleepily about what I should do. It was the televised Oscars ceremony that day, and I told her I was going to chill out and watch it. "Perfect!" she said. It started to get very uncomfortable lying down with lots of pressure on my pelvis, so I decided I needed to get up and walk around the flat. At 10am, when the Oscars red carpet show started, Donald and I lazed around watching it. Soon Sheryl joined my doula Daana, Donald and I at our flat. The atmosphere was like a little party, with the four of us commenting on the stars' outfits and movies, and every few minutes I would have to stop talking and have to 'go within', breathing on my exercise ball.

At around 2pm, the contractions seemed to wane a little and weren't as frequent, but soon after something happened and I came back to the lounge room feeling like I couldn't feel comfortable sitting anymore. I also asked that the TV be muted as I was annoyed by the sounds of the Oscars going on in the background! I then asked Sheryl if I could go have a shower (I was worried that using water too soon might slow labour down). She said I could, so we walked back up the hall to the bathroom where Daana asked me if I'd prefer to have a bath. I agreed so she ran it.

This was the turning point into established labour, and I could feel it very clearly. I'm not sure how long I was in the bath for, but soon someone made the suggestion that I should go into the birthing pool now. Out of the water it was much more difficult to breathe through the contractions. At times I was straining with the pain, and I could feel my face scrunching up as they washed over me. Daana kept reminding me: "Buddha face" and "Ride the wave" so I would un-tense and relax. My back was sore, and the closest I can get to describe it was that it felt like I was being sucked down a whirlpool, and there was nowhere to escape.



Once it was filled, getting into it felt so good – the pain melted away. I quickly began trying to find a good position in the pool and came to spreading my legs out wide, touching the sides of the pool, with my arms on the pool's edge supporting me. After a while I felt the contractions changing, coming stronger and more frequently. Something in me wanted my body to be on all fours, so I concentrated on focussing some energy on trying to move. It was difficult, but I flipped over so I was now on all fours in the pool, with my nose just up against the water, breathing down on it. It felt natural and as if I could be more open in this position.

At this point, I was completely overcome by the contractions. They were so hard! I was swearing – nothing too bad, but it was as if I could not believe how intense they were and this was how I expressed it! I looked up at Sheryl who was by the side of the pool and asked her how much longer this would feel this way. She said she didn't know. I told her I was scared that the baby wouldn't come out. She just told me that the baby would definitely come out, and not to worry. I felt better getting this reassurance, and having her there to tell me that baby and I was going to be OK.

At this point I felt a new sensation at the end of the contraction - I felt like pushing. It took me by surprise. The feeling was like a reward at the end of a contraction, as if the contraction itself was building up towards this new feeling. The one thing I felt at this point was that if I wanted to, I could have had multiple orgasms! It was very tight down there, but the whole area around my perineum felt tingly and alive. I had read about this, and couldn't believe I was feeling it! It made me so happy as I had, from the beginning of my pregnancy, been fascinated by the 'orgasmic' birth experience. I had thought it was a metaphor for the intensity of the experience, but now I knew it was a real feeling.

Sheryl asked if I could feel the baby's head moving down now. I felt immense pressure and fullness. I put my hand down to try to feel it, but I wasn't sure what I was feeling. I thought it was my cervix folded over on itself as I'd read that this could happen. Sheryl felt it and laughed – that was our baby's head! Couldn't I feel the hair, she asked? After she told me, I was so happy and I got it. With Daana holding me, I suspended myself almost completely in the water, while channelling all the energy I had to pushing. I imagined baby also going through this feeling and hoped s/he was doing OK. Sheryl would listen with the Doppler and laugh out loud because the heartbeat was so healthy. I grunted hard when I pushed, and it felt good. I was so aware of where the baby was at this point. I hadn't even pushed half a dozen times when I thought to myself, "This is really it! Baby and I can do this! We can meet soon!" Once I thought that to myself, I pushed once and felt the crowning of the head, then one more and the head was out! I had my hand on her head, and it was amazing! The skin on her head was so elastic and soft. That moment seemed to linger as I took it in. I was so proud of her for coming down the birth canal to meet us.

The next contraction and the birth of her body is a bit of a blur. It happened without any pain and very quickly. Donald said that he saw her coming out looking like an astronaut, floating on her cord! I do remember that Sheryl was down there and scooped up her body, and then Daana asked me "What do you have?" I looked down and said "It's a girl!" Maya was placed on my chest straight away and she looked at me with tired eyes. She spluttered a bit and had a very little cry. She looked so serene and really not like a newborn at all (I guess she was two weeks 'late'). The placenta was born during a contraction with the help of Sheryl. It was beautiful and healthy and I was in awe of it actually!

It was a wonderful day, so normal and comfortable at home with our birthing team. I feel so lucky to have been able to give birth in this way. Now, eight weeks on, Maya is a delight and we are so in love with her. I'm a different woman after having given birth to her. I think back to the fear I had and it seems like a different person. Having worked through so much in relation to the pregnancy and giving birth, I feel like it was all preparation for being a mother too. I don't want to stop learning and questioning and being open to the experience.



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Diesel's Birth

AMANDA
KANE



I can still remember clearly the day my husband Pete and I found out we were pregnant. After eighteen months of trying to conceive, we were in shock when we saw the two lines on the pregnancy test. It was real!

In the early weeks of my pregnancy I read many books and articles to help me make a decision about where to have our baby. I had attended my best friend's second home birth nine years earlier and this experience rested in the back of my mind. When I began to mention to my family that I was reading about 'natural' birth they laughed and reminded me that I couldn't handle pain and that there was no way I should be considering such a thing. Even though I knew I was a 'wuss' when it came to pain, something inside told me homebirth was the right choice for us.

Preparing for our homebirth meant that I needed to be physically, emotionally and mentally prepared. We enrolled in Calmbirth & Active Birth workshops, did pre-natal yoga from 12 weeks, meditated and wrote positive affirmations about my birth, read and listened to only inspiring and uplifting birth stories, saw a chiropractor weekly, continued to work out and ensured my diet was super healthy.

One of the most memorable and powerful experiences in my preparation for my birth was the Blessing Way held for me by my high school girlfriends. At thirty six weeks pregnant, my friends flew into Sydney from all around Australia for a ceremony to honour and give me strength for my upcoming birth. The ceremony included candle lighting, bead threading, string tying, singing and sharing readings and inspiring quotes, poems and words from the heart. I felt so calm and ready and remained in this state throughout the final weeks of my pregnancy.

On Wednesday morning, four days past my due date, I woke with mild period pain and a slight 'show'. After going to bed that night I woke around midnight unable to sleep through the sensations I was feeling. I decided that rather than make the 'birth' cake I had always planned I would make in pre-labour, that I would watch a movie and try to rest and reserve my energy. I remember Akal, my amazing midwife explaining that if we wasted all our energy in pre-labour, we would have no reserves left for the real thing.

During the day on Thursday I remained on my feet as I worked through my contractions. Later in the afternoon the contractions had become more intense. I had resorted to a strange standing position against a wall to work

through each one, but during the 'rest' period my lower back was not giving me much relief. My patient husband rubbed and massaged my lower back, and other times I rested while doing the cat and cow pose.

In the early hours of Friday morning I could tell things were vamping up. My contractions were lasting longer, peaking for a longer period of time and were much closer together. My back continued to ache and I began to feel more irritable and like I was having difficulty managing the sensation. I had to focus more intently on my breathing, which took on a voice of its own - using mainly the horse out-breath to try and relax my face and hips. I visualized myself riding waves and used a freestyle motion with my arms to help with the images I was creating. At around 3am I begged Pete to call Akal.

I soon became irritable with the sunroom, which was the room I had spent the most of my time in. I moved to the dining room and lent against the buffet, rocking and lunging to move my hips. Saraca, my amazing birth support person was busy preparing food and helping Pete with the birth pool.

At times Akal came over to remind me to relax my face, but for the most part she remained in the distance. It felt good knowing she was there, but I also felt empowered as I worked through the contractions on my own. I moved from the buffet to the taller bookshelf and used a visualization of clinging to the top of a cliff and moving across the top edge. As I moved from one side of the shelf to the other I counted twenty long breaths and tried to breathe the pain away.

I used the shower early Friday morning which was like a dream. The heat on my back gave me so much relief that on coming out, the contractions seemed to bite a little harder. Pete was amazing, often reminding me of my 'cooling soup' breath, handing me an icy pole or just holding me during a contraction.

Around mid morning I distinctly remember a strange kind of lull between my contractions. I was able to enjoy the broth of some miso soup Saraca had made, and take some photos with Pete. I also put on my necklace that we had made at my Blessing Way. I was ready.

When I entered the birth pool the water was bliss. The contractions were still strong, but the water surrounding me helped to ease their sting. I lent over the birth pool and looked directly at the beautiful bowl of candles that we had lit at my Blessing Way. The sun was shining outside and there was a



slight breeze which blew the blessing flags that were hung in the room. My birth space Pete had created for me was perfect.

After finding the right position in the birth pool, I rode the wave of each contraction. I found that I was able to go inside myself more easily and being in the pool seemed to make me feel safe and secure. After about an

hour in the pool, Akal offered me a VE. The minute I lay down Akal could see my bladder was very full and possibly in the way of the baby's path.

After an intense contraction lying on the mattress, I relieved myself and Akal confirmed that I was ten cm dilated and that she could feel my baby's head. How exciting!

When we returned to the birth room, there was an exhilarating energy surrounding us. I overheard Akal talking to Saraca, saying something about how to time when the baby was born. I was really about to have this baby!

By now it was around 1pm and during each contraction I tried hard to breathe the baby down, sometimes resisting the urge to push. Time passed, but still no baby. Akal coached me on how to push and to breathe deep into my uterus rather than out like I had been doing. I concentrated intently, trying to visualize the breath moving into my uterus to help push baby out. Akal used a mirror to see my progress, and although small, she could see part of my baby's head.

After about 2 hours I was physically and mentally exhausted. Although I never once allowed myself to give up, I was feeling tired and really looking to Akal for advice and a plan B. I felt as though the contractions weren't long enough for me to get a good go at pushing. When I would finally make some progress, my contraction would subside and I could no longer push.

I decided to get out of the water. We moved back into the room where we did the VE and I lay on my side. After a few contractions I wasn't getting far. My legs were cramping and I just wanted to get back to the water.

When we returned to the birth pool, Akal showed Pete how to support me in a supported squat and we stood in the birth pool, with my bottom lowered just into the water. Even though I knew I was making progress, I began to feel some anxiety creeping in. I knew I had been in second stage for almost three hours and I had a fleeting thought about the hospital, so turned to Akal to ask about her plan C. She talked to me about the old fashion way to push; holding my breath and bearing down without breathing out. The idea

of not breathing was extremely foreign to me, so this, although seemingly simple, was harder than I anticipated. Pete continued to hold me in the supported squat position and we worked through some more contractions with this kind of breath.

After some time, I felt I needed to get out of the pool again. As I stood out of the birth pool and almost as soon as both my feet hit the tarp, I screamed for Pete to hold me in the squat position. He quickly grabbed me and on the third contraction half of our baby's head emerged. I was so stunned that I had got this far that I rested in this squat position, not wanting to stand in fear of him popping back inside.

Waiting for the next contraction seemed like an eternity, but as soon as the wave came in, the remainder of our baby's head and his entire body slid out. After realizing that our baby was born... I think I was in shock for a few moments, I hopped back into the pool to rest and soak up this amazing moment. Our baby boy was here. Welcome to the world Diesel Robert Kane.

Diesel was born at 3:44pm Friday 24 September, 2010. He weighed 3.12kg and measured 50cm. After such a long labour and challenging second stage, I wonder, had I not been at home, would a hospital have allowed me the time I needed to birth my baby? Probably not. I was so relieved that we chose to birth at home, in the comfort and security of a place we knew, surrounded by people we trusted and loved. I can't thank my support team enough- Akal Khalsa for her expertise, patience, calm and belief in me, my loving husband Pete and friend Saraca.



Lukman Johnson
m: 0403 971 570

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Johnny Ray's

My experience with 2 remarkable midwives



After a traumatic experience with my first child, I felt really disappointed in myself and my body. I found it very difficult to understand what happened in her birth and how I ended up in emergency, under a general, left alone in recovery and woke up not knowing what had happened. I researched for months after my first birth and went to a counsellor to overcome my experience.

My husband Ben and I felt it was time to start trying for our second child. After a year and a half my periods had not come back regularly and we tried for nine months to fall pregnant. During this time I contacted several hospitals, both public and private, and I was hearing the same thing each time - that due to the complications of my first birth, having the general and haemorrhaging, I was a high risk patient and most likely would have to be under the eye of an obstetrician. My chances for a natural birth were very low. Manly hospital said that they would do all they could to help me have a VBAC... if things were all going smoothly. So with all this info and also research on hospitals and their protocols for VBACS, I felt that maybe I was not destined to have a natural birth, but longed for the natural experience and to see how it felt to birth my child.



I then talked to my friends and family who had experienced homebirths and midwife care. I had a big chat with my cousin Jaclyn and my friend Chelsea who both explained and educated me with successful VBAC stories, and emailed me loads of websites to check out and information to read up on. I decided to join a local homebirth network group from whom I got to ask questions and learn about other's experiences and success stories first hand. I met a number of midwives and then was recommended by my cousin that Shea and Sheryl were wonderful, and if I was able to get in with them I would have a great experience. After a phone call with Sheryl, I felt comfortable straight away with her supportive words and encouragement towards my journey. I immediately booked them both in and our journey began.



After many gatherings I got to know Sheryl and Shea very well and they spent a lot of time talking to me about my past experience and how to move on. I was given plenty of information and had explained in great detail all parts of my pregnancy and my birth experience to come. I got to share all my thoughts, concerns and fears with both midwives and got points of view to handle all of these concerns. After each gathering I felt empowered and confidence was growing inside me, and I know I could get that birth experience I had always dreamed of.

Leading up to my birth I was every excited and had had a wonderful easy

Birth:



OLIVIA
SOLOMON

– Shea Caplice and Sheryl Sidery

pregnancy. I was well informed on what I was going to do, and taught by my midwives how to let go and trust in my body to do the job it is designed to do which is to birth naturally. My beautiful midwives made me feel so special and confident leading up to the birth of my second child, and I felt I was ready.

On the day of Johnny Ray's birth, I called Sheryl at 8am to inform her that I was getting pre-labour contractions and felt that today was going to be the day. I had a pink show and my bowels had emptied. My body was preparing itself for the birth. I was calm and relaxed the whole morning. Shea called around at 10am to see how I was travelling and told me to call when things get more intense and that I would probably go into labour when my first child Jacinta was asleep, or if she was minded. Both Sheryl and Shea made me feel at ease and enjoy my day and my experience which was approaching. Ben contacted Sheryl when the contractions were getting closer together, Sheryl spoke to me on the phone and said she felt I sounded different. Then they went from five minutes to three minutes to two minutes and then 'Bang' – waters broke and it was full steam ahead.

Still as calm as I could be, Ben and I went down stairs and on the way contacted Shea. Shea arrived within ten minutes and was by my side, smile on her face, and the calmness about her made me feel very safe and well looked after. Shea continued to monitor me and smile and encourage me and ensure that I was doing great and to let go. I listened to every word. I was calm when hearing her voice and knowing I was in a special place enjoying (as much as I could) the pressure of birth. I loved that when I felt something or wanted to know something while labouring, that I could ask Shea and have it explained and she mentored me to get through it.

Sheryl my second midwife had arrived and I was in the pool and ready to push at this stage. Having both midwives beside me holding my hand I felt powerful, centred, calm, and encouraged that yes, I was going to do this. I remembered following the words my midwives were giving me. I listened and did everything they said and believe this is why everything went so smoothly. Even to the point when a contraction came and I was to push, they encouraged me to keep pushing and the next minute the head was out. I felt the intense pressure on my bottom but then I felt in the moment and overjoyed that I had birthed my baby's head and it went so smoothly. After encouraging words again from my midwives, with the next contraction my beautiful, perfect son "John Raymond Solomon" was born and put straight on my chest. My body was tingling with excitement and joy, I felt

so powerful and felt like a woman and the thoughts and natural chemicals filtering through my mind were magical as I gazed down to meet my little boy. "WOW!"

After the birth my midwives smiled at me and made me feel very special and congratulated me on my new arrival and that I had birthed the way I wanted and so quickly. Looking around me I remember thinking "This is the moment I want to remember for the rest of my life", of accomplishment and the wonderful beauty of nature that had taken place, the smile on my husband's face and the look of joy in everyone's eyes.

Having midwives be a part of this experience is truly amazing and I would like to educate and inform others of their choices and that anything is possible with the right structure in place.

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Mason's Birth

KATE
CLARKE



My first pregnancy with Tara, now three, had gone well, and I had delivered her in a thirty six hour drug free labour with a doula in a private hospital, and the only intervention was breaking waters at 7cms. So when I fell pregnant the second time, I just imagined I would birth the same way and hopefully have no intervention.

I booked into the same Ob for my first pregnancy but when we turned up and found he smelt strongly of cigarette smoke, I phoned to cancel his services the following day and booked into another highly recommended Ob. This Ob greeted me with negativity and pushiness that didn't sit well with me. I wasn't pleased to be told "Big sweet tooth-big baby-big forceps" when my GD test came back borderline, nor did I appreciate him suggesting being induced at thirty seven weeks when my pregnancy had no complications at all – it may have had something to do with my due date of December 28th. I wouldn't want to disrupt his Christmas functions!!

I had a meeting with my doula and told her I had always been interested in homebirth but at thirty three weeks thought it wouldn't be possible to organize it now, but as she said "Look into it and if you find a brick wall you know it's not meant to be, but if it goes ahead smoothly then you know it is right." I rang a midwife who was happy to take me on (Jacqui Wood), even though I only had seven weeks to go and was expecting a Christmas baby. My Ob gave me a full refund after I told him I no longer wanted his service and slowly my husband Garrett came around to the idea after a few meetings with our midwife.

Christmas Day 2010 came along and I was woken at 2am with a few niggles and a dull ache in my lower back. I had a sense this was "It" but managed to push it to the back of my mind for most of the day so I could enjoy Christmas with Tara. I was determined for him not to be born on Christmas day as I really wanted him to have his own day. Sensations were getting more intense during the day but I tried to keep rested as I thought I may be in for a long night as my first labour was thirty six hours and started exactly like this. I lost a little of my mucous plug around 2pm then we had an early dinner with my parents and went for a drive to look at Christmas lights with Tara until 9pm. When we arrived home, Tara and I had a special moment when from nowhere she placed her head on my tummy and cuddled her little brother then said "What are your favourite Christmas lights buddy?" "You want to come out and see them with us?"

We put Tara to bed after she pointed out that my tummy was "VERY HARD!" and I said that her baby brother was ready to come out tomorrow or the next day. I tucked myself into bed around 10pm and tried to get some rest but I couldn't get comfortable. At midnight I decided to leave everyone asleep and head to our garage where I had set up a rug, beanbag, candles, music and oils, and walk around to ease the discomfort. I walked around until I felt a contraction then swayed from side to side like I was dancing with my baby. I was using my iPhone contraction timer and although they were irregular they were around thirty four seconds long every two and a half minutes. I took a dose of Caulophyllum from my Ainsworth Homeopathy kit, hoping to reduce the labour length.

At 2pm I thought I was coping OK with conscious breathing, but I could feel the intensity of the sensations rise, so I messaged my doula Jan and asked her to come join me for some support. After a few more sensations I woke Garrett up and told him the doula was coming over and could he start setting up the birth pool as I knew that would take a while. He spoke to my parents and asked them to come over but thought if it was anything like my last labour we will still have a good twenty four hours to go.

My parents came over to watch Tara while she slept. Poppy slept in Tara's queen bed with her while Gran came into the garage with me and got heat packs ready for me. I told her I messaged the midwife Jacqui at 2am warning her but wasn't sure if I should get her to come yet - she suggested I should as it is an hour drive for her. By 2.30 Jan arrived and gave me a big welcoming hug and told me this is where I'm supposed to be and to relax and let go. I told her my legs were tired from walking around but I struggled to find a comfortable seated position. We simply sat down and with Mum holding a heat pack on my back and using an endorphin release technique of scratching nails down my back and legs, and Jan in front of me talking me through each sensation, I sat eyes closed. I told myself to relax every other muscle I could while having a contraction as I had learnt in Powerbirth and focused on opening up. I was imagining a cervix opening but at that time I really thought I was aiming for 3cm or so but I must have been more like 7-9cm. I spoke to Jan about my worries as I wanted to acknowledge then let them go so I could be free. I said I was worried I had called everyone out when it wasn't the real thing. I was concerned that my doula and midwife would have to go back home. She reminded me that I needed to stop thinking (something I'm very good at!) and relax and surrender to the labour.

I felt so much pressure in my bottom so I grabbed the beanbag and leaned over it, I felt a huge release of fluid and was so shocked I asked my doula if it was my waters breaking. My mum was behind me so she said it wasn't a lot but yes it was. I was so surprised as I really wanted them to break naturally this time because in my first hospital birth, they were broken at 7cm for me. After that release I felt the intensity and said to my doula "He is coming." They said they would help me over to the birth pool as it was quite a distance - I have never been on such a mission. I had visualized having a morning waterbirth so I was very determined to get to the pool before he was born and I didn't want to have a contraction outside on the way either. I didn't wait for Mum or Jan, I just got up, tried to keep my legs together and waddled as fast as to the birth pool. I saw Garrett standing there filling the pool which was now only half full, but got straight in and knelt down and felt between my legs. I could feel the softest hair I had ever felt waving gently in the pool water. I said "His head is right there", I don't think anyone, even myself, believed all of this was happening so quickly. Someone asked Garrett to ring Jacqui to see how far away she was and as I felt the next wave of sensation, I looked at Jan who was in front of me and a fear broke out in me. I'm not sure why I was fearful but I think it was that my visualization of my homebirth included my midwife being there in the background. My doula looked at me intensely and said "You're OK, this is fine!" I felt an urge to push but kept my hand flat across his head as I wasn't ready for him to come. I asked for Garrett to come back inside as he was talking to Jacqui on the phone outside.

Mum went to get Garrett and Jan told him to take her place in front of me and Mum stood behind me. I looked strongly into Garrett's eyes while I got another urge to push. I birthed his head slowly, this time feeling the ring of fire but not being afraid of it. I slowly pushed through it and said to Garrett "His head is out!" With the next quick urge I pushed out his shoulders slowly without a tear and pulled him up onto my chest and sat down in the pool... amazing! Exactly how I saw my waterbirth going, but maybe in fast forward as it all happened so quickly.

Mason Rook was born 3.44am (luckily my doula asked my Mum for the time!). 10 minutes later I heard my midwife's car pull up.

An important part of my birth plan was to finish by birthing the placenta. With my first birth the OB used cord traction to release it, as it had already separated but I was so exhausted I couldn't get up to birth it. Mason and I sat in the pool for an hour just cuddling, waiting for the placenta to detach. It was the only unknown to me as I had done everything else before, so I felt tension I needed to let go of. I needed to relax but my brain was spinning into having to be transferred to hospital if it didn't detach. My midwife, doula and mum stepped outside to give me space to relax and to have time with my new family just Garrett, Mason and myself.

I felt contractions intensely while I took Mason to the breast for the first time. I wasn't sure what to do with them if I needed to push or not. Jacqui explained that just like I know when to push Mason out, I will know when to push out the placenta - I had to listen to my body. She said I will see a little blood in the water when the placenta separates - it was still very clear with only a few bits of vernix floating around. She said I could cut the cord and let Mason go to Garrett while I birthed the placenta, but I had an image of Mason attached to it so I wanted it to be birthed with him.

Jan knew I was contemplating a lotus birth and that this stage meant a lot to me. Soon we could see it had separated and I handed Mason to Garrett who

was on the side of the pool, I leaned over the edge of the pool and Garrett's shoulder, and finally felt the urge to push. It came out in one go and I lifted it up to the surface full, complete and beautiful! We then decided it was time to clamp and cut about 1.5 hours after he was born - I bet a hospital wouldn't let me wait that long!

We estimated established labour was 1.5 hrs long with no interventions, internals or foetal monitoring at all. And my daughter Tara had slept through the whole thing, so we went to wake her up at 6.30am to meet her new brother, and we all sat around eating breakfast and watching the sunrise while the gentle rain set in.

We planted Mason's placenta under a Bird Of Paradise tree as his middle name Rook is a name of a strong and intelligent bird of prey found in paradise - we often see the crows gather around it and like to think that they are his deceased loved ones protecting him.



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SARAH MCLEAN

March 29, 2011 – The Conversation Hospital birth units make stress-heads out of mums

Maralyn Foureur, Professor of Midwifery at University of Technology, Sydney

The stress a mother experiences during birth can lead to interventions such as caesareans. More than 200,000 Australian women give birth in hospital every year, but very few give much thought to the room in which they will do it.

Imagine a woman's surprise when they walk in to discover that this momentous, life-changing, intimate, exhausting yet exhilarating experience will take place in a bedroom decked out like an operating theatre. For many women this is not a comfortable space. But does it really matter?

New research reveals that indeed it does. Giving birth requires complex chemical processes to unfold in the mother's brain and body. This process can be interrupted or stopped altogether if the woman becomes frightened or stressed.

The research shows there is a connection between the design of rooms where mothers give birth, their stress levels and the potential effect of such stress on newborns. There may also be a link between the design of birth rooms and the increasing number of emergency surgical births.

<http://theconversation.edu.au/articles/hospital-birth-units-make-stress-heads-out-of-mums-466>

March 31, 2011 – The Economist Is there no place like home? Where women give birth is a contentious issue across the rich world

<http://www.economist.com/node/18483718>

Risky and self-indulgent eccentricity, or a return to natural obstetrics? A medical and political row rages between supporters of home birth, many of them midwives and expectant parents, and its detractors, many of them doctors. Start telling women where they may or may not give birth, with hints that the choice may endanger their child's life, and the gloves come off. A court in Hungary has just sentenced the country's leading proponent of home births, a midwife and obstetrician called Agnes Gereb, to two years in jail for medical negligence in a case concerning two births, in one of which the baby died. She has also been banned from practising for five years. Ms Gereb is appealing against her sentence, which was tougher than even the prosecution wanted. Police have closed the birthing centre she founded and seized its records.

21 April, 2011 – Nine MSN Home birth v hospital birth - Kerry Warren

<http://www.ninemsn.com.au/family/parenting/8236475/home-birth-v-hospital-birth?page=2>

Justine Caines, spokeswoman for Homebirth Australia and mother of eight children, all born in her home discussed the benefits for her for choosing give birth at home.

She discussed how it was about giving her and her baby the best chance of a healthy and intervention-free birth. Her experience with friends was that many interventions were not based on need. Some of them suffered after surgery and she did not want this to happen to me. Homebirth provided her with a relationship and considerable support from one midwife. This in turn created a high level of clinical safety. Her midwife watched her labour closely and would have recognised any abnormalities early on.

Researchers from the Australian National University and James Cook

University are about to launch a comprehensive world-first study into differences in outcomes for mothers and babies who have planned vaginal or planned caesarean births.

The study will run for the next three years, recruiting women under the care of private obstetricians, and examining a range of outcomes including depression, incontinence, breastfeeding rates and satisfaction.

1 April, 2011 Planned Home vs Hospital Birth: A Meta-Analysis Gone Wrong

Carl A. Michal, PhD; Patricia A. Janssen, PhD; Saraswathi Vedam, SciD; Eileen K. Hutton, PhD; Ank de Jonge, PhD

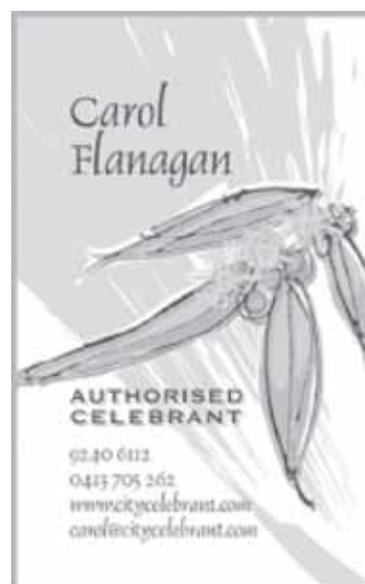
The highly charged debate over the safety of home birth was inflamed by the publication of a meta-analysis by Joseph R. Wax and coworkers, which concluded that "less medical intervention during planned home birth is associated with a tripling of the neonatal mortality rate." The statistical analysis upon which this conclusion was based was deeply flawed, containing many numerical errors, improper inclusion and exclusion of studies, mischaracterization of cited works, and logical impossibilities. In addition, the software tool used for nearly two thirds of the meta-analysis calculations contains serious errors that can dramatically underestimate confidence intervals (CIs), and this resulted in at least 1 spuriously statistically significant result. Despite the publication of statements and commentaries querying the reliability of the findings, this faulty study now forms the evidentiary basis for an American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee Opinion, meaning that its results are being presented to expectant parents as the state-of-the-art in home birth safety research.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/739987>

24 April, 2011 – Sydney Morning Herald Mother of all journeys - Rachel Browne

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/mother-of-all-journeys-20110423-1ds4y.html#ixzz1KrhKlaj>

Pregnant women are being bumped from NSW hospitals despite having booked in, as the baby boom and an increase in birth complications put more pressure on maternity units. Many large public maternity units have introduced a cap on numbers and geographical limits on patients. But one mother, who was not accepted at her hospital, was forced to do a four-hour round trip on public transport to bring expressed milk to her premature twins.



New Homebirth Groups

Armidale and District Homebirth Support Network



A handful of the dozen or so families that meet each month (including two Independent Midwives)

Armidale and District Homebirth Support Network was established in 2010 to support families in the area who were planning to or had given birth at home. The group was established by Melodie Glass (who continues to coordinate) whilst in the final stages of preparing for her second homebirth. "Being new to the area and not knowing others who had made a similar birth choice, the midwives I was seeing continued to give me the names of other families who had birthed at home. I was struck by the number of families for such a small population and decided a support group was exactly what was needed" says Melodie. Now the group is growing steadily and continues to welcome new members as women in the community also use the group as a referral point for deciding on and planning to give birth at home. Despite various available options, many women had been told by local health professionals that home birth is not possible, so now the group plays an important role in promoting birth choice. The group has also begun to become active in their local political arena to draw attention to the fact that homebirth can be very difficult for many to access in regional and rural areas of NSW.

Melodie Glass

Central Coast Homebirth Group



I was very happily pregnant for the first time, had moved to the Central Coast and was keen to meet some like-minded women. I found the local maternity coalition at an "Empowering Birth" talk and met women who had birthed at the local Wyong Birthing Centre and one woman who had had a homebirth. The Wyong Birthing Centre has a great reputation and is solely run by midwives. But I had my heart set on a homebirth and was extremely fortunate to find my midwife, who was willing to travel from Sydney. Unfortunately, there are currently no local independent midwives here

(although Lisa Richard is rumoured to be coming in July!). I had so many questions about homebirth and after feeling frustrated at the lack of support, I decided to have a go and start a group with the help of my midwife and Joyous Birth. Our first meeting was at a local cafe with three other Mum's who had either had a homebirth or was interested in having a homebirth. It was such a brilliant time of common interests and experiences. We've committed to meeting once a month and Kim, a new homebirth Mamma is co-leading the group so we can share the load.

Jenar Morris

From my point of view, the group was great because it created a space where we could just be ourselves, without judgement. I'd attended the local early family childhood facilitated "mothers group" but just didn't connect with anyone there, mostly because our birth stories and parenting journeys are so different. I grew swiftly tired of having to answer immunisation questions and be met with loaded silences when we announced we were immunising homeopathically...and even that we homebirthed! You'd be surprised how many times prior to going to the new h/b group that I had been asked did I "intentionally" homebirth! It was also great to be able to answer any questions Jena had about her pending homebirth...and to be able to make the next meeting on a Saturday just so the boys can make it to support Jena's partner Stephen, as he prepares to support Jena as they welcome their homebirth bubba into the world in the next few weeks. I have to say it felt so comfortable meeting the girls for the first time. It's a bit of a cliché, but it felt like we'd met before...but I guess that's because our journeys are so similar. I know I am not alone in feeling grateful for the lack of judgement passed on the choices we had all made about our births. There was no need to explain our rationales for not scanning, not testing for gestational diabetes, or not choosing mainstream immunisation. The space was safe... with an element of the sacred belief in a woman's ability to birth her baby!

Kim Ryder

Birth Choices Expo March 5 – Sarah McLean



Homebirth Access Sydney had a table at the Birth Choices Expo at Leichardt Town Hall on March 5th. The event was a huge success with parents and parents-to-be seeking information and advice about pregnancy, parenting and beyond. Birth Choices Expo's aim is to make information about pregnancy, birth and parenting more accessible so that you can make the right choices for you and your baby, and experience the joy of parenting. Jo Tilly, Greta Werner and Sarah McLean were womaning our table selling homebirth books, t-shirts and magazines, as well as spreading information about how to access a homebirth in Sydney. It was also a great opportunity to catch up with some of the homebirth midwives, doulas and other healthcare professionals who support homebirthing women.

Birth Choices Incorporated Committee Members Wanted

Join a group of dynamic, motivated people that are passionate about birth and building community support for woman and thier families. Meetings are once a month and babies and children welcome.

If you are interested in joining the committee please contact: anne@birthchoicesexpo.com.au

PRE-NATAL SERVICES

City & Eastern Suburbs

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61 Queen St, Woollahra, www.RedTent.com.au
Naomi 0413 690 861, naomi@redtent.com.au
Rebecca 0404 457 911, rebecca@redtent.com.au

REBECCA GOULDHURST

Doula, Naturopath, Counsellor, Pregnancy Masseur & Hypnobirthing
I am a passionate doula practicing from a naturopathic and counselling background. I have been in practice for 14 years. Being a doula allows me to support parents-to-be with my wisdom and experience of the birth process and the know how to create the birth that you want. Birth is a magical time that I am honoured to be part of. I have experience both at home and in hospitals and have different packages to suit all. All enquiries welcome.
Rebecca Gouldhurst, 93864243, 0415304369
counsellor@doula.net.au
www.rebeccagouldhurst.net.au

Inner West

AUSTRALIAN DOULA COLLEGE & THE CENTRE FOR SPIRITUAL BIRTH & DEVELOPMENT

Please see our listing on the next page under 'Birth Support Services: Doulas'. 422 Marrickville RD, Marrickville 2204 / 1300 139 507
moreinfo@australiandoulacollege.com.au
www.australiandoulacollege.com.au

BIRTHSENSE WITH JACKI MCFARLANE

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For group details and individual sessions please phone Jacki: 90433079 or 0419286619
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Erika Elliot - Birthing in Awareness
Erika is a passionate and experienced doula and birthing mentor who offers support from pre-conception awareness through to the early days of post-natal care. Facilitating calmbirth® & Birthing from Within preparation courses, Erika also offers massage, blessingway ceremonies and birth photography. Monthly group sessions or private preparations are available. Birthing services are offered to couples in the Inner West, Eastern Suburbs and the North Shore.
Erika Elliott 0425 217788 erikabirth@gmail.com
Preparation * Education * Support

North Shore / Northern Beaches

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calmbirth® is an enriching prenatal course for women planning a homebirth, water birth, active and natural birth. calmbirth® affirms that birth is a normal process, and you will learn relaxation skills to use during pregnancy, birth and beyond. Learn how to work with your body, partner and discover a wonderful way to have a positive birth experience. Louise is an experienced midwife and childbirth educator and courses are held in Dee Why and Neutral Bay. Contact Louise for more details and dates.
Louise Luscri / 0408 231 759
info@allaboutbirth.com.au
www.allaboutbirth.com.au

HEATHER CRAWFORD

Acupuncturist, Doula, calmbirth®
Please see my listing on the next page under 'Birth Support Services: Doulas'
Heather: 9777 7888 or 0423 171 191
heather@heathercrawford.com.au
www.heathercrawford.com.au

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Erika Elliot - Birthing in Awareness
Erika is a passionate and experienced doula and birthing mentor who offers support from pre-conception awareness through to the early days of post-natal care. Facilitating calmbirth® & Birthing from Within preparation courses, Erika also offers massage, blessingway ceremonies and birth photography. Monthly group sessions or private preparations are available. Birthing services are offered to couples in the Inner West, Eastern Suburbs and the North Shore.
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Visit: www.julieclarke.com.au see website for dates and discount. Special note: Julie's calmbirth® course is very reasonably priced.
Julie Clarke / julie@julieclarke.com.au
0401265530 / 9544 6441. 9 Witherbrook Pl. Sylvania (20mins south of airport).

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Southern Highlands

PREGNANCY WORKSHOPS

Midwife Jane Hardwicke Collings gives regular workshops – "Pregnancy The Inner Journey" – in the Southern Highlands and in other places by arrangement. As well as "The School of Shamanic Midwifery" – a women's mysteries school for doulas and midwives
Jane Hardwicke Collings
48882002, 0408035808
janeollings@bigpond.com
www.moonsong.com.au
www.placentaremedy.com

HOME BIRTH SUPPORT GROUPS

SYDNEY & SURROUNDS

Inner West Homebirth Support Group
Day: First Wednesday of Every Month
Time: from 10am
Contact: Magda 0410 139 907
magda.jansen@gmail.com

Sutherland Shire and St George Homebirth Group
10.30am weekly on Thursdays.
Contact Virginia 0415683074 or maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Illawarra Homebirth Support
Karen Sanders (02) 4225 3727

Mothers & Midwives of the South (Southern Highlands)
We meet every month in the Illawarra area. For more details contact Jane Collings on 4888 2002, 0408035808 or Jaia on 0431709978, jaia_shanti@yahoo.com.au
Everyone welcome!

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support
Gatherings fortnightly on a Thursday at 10am.
Alicia 47592336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com

Central Coast Homebirth Group
First Friday of each month.
Contact Kim 0406 502 715
p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com.
All welcome.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Birth Central (Far south coast)
Cindy (02) 64940131
www.birthcentral.org.au

Armidale and District Homebirth Support Network
Contact: Melodie
Mobile: 0402 910 211
Email: hbsarmidale@gmail.com

Clarence Valley Birth Support
Laena Jongen-Morter (02) 6649 4271

Far North Coast NSW
Jillian Delailie (02) 6689 1641

Mid North Coast Homebirth Support Resource & Referral
Berry Engel-Jones (WV) 6652 8111 (H) 6655 0707

INTERSTATE & NATIONAL

Homebirth Australia
Jo Hunter (02) 4751 9840
homebirth.australia@bigpond.com

Queensland (07) 3839 5883 | email
info@homebirth.org.au

Darwin Homebirth Group (09) 8985 5871
darwin.homebirth@octa4.net.au

Homebirth in the Hills – Dandenong Ranges
Melinda Whyman (03) 9754 1347
mwhyman@bigpond.net.au

Homebirth on the Mornington Peninsula
Kim (03) 5987 0657
Alice Springs Homebirth Group
Anna Yffer 0402 424 780
wildisha@gmail.com

BIRTH SUPPORT SERVICES: DOULAS

NORTHERN & NORTH-WESTERN SUBURBS

Jacqui James
I am passionate about supporting & encouraging families during pregnancy, labour, birth and in the early "daze". I work with both parents and assist in creating a nurturing environment for the baby to be born. The birth of a baby is a sacred experience and I feel honoured to be a part of it. I also facilitate mother/family blessing ceremonies.
I trained in 2003 at Birth Central, completing post natal doula in 2005. References available.
Mob: 0418 445 653
jacquij@people.net.au

Heather Crawford
Acupuncturist, Doula, calmbirth®
I practice from a lovely clinic overlooking Manly beach and provide acupuncture services for the whole family through pre-conception, pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. I offer birth support and have been a doula for 4 years, I also hold calmbirth® classes once a month in Frenchs Forest. I love tea and birthing chats or you can see my website for more info.
Phone: 9977 7888 or 0423 171 191
15 South Steyne, Manly
heather@heathercrawford.com.au
www.heathercrawford.com.au

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422 Marrickville Road
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moreinfo@australiandoulacollege.com.au
www.australiandoulacollege.com.au

MotherBirth - ConsciousBirth
Erika Elliot - Birthing in Awareness
Please see my listing on the previous page under 'PreNatal Services' 0425 217 788
erikabirth@gmail.com

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As a homebirth mum, I have the experience and trust in natural birth to be your ideal birth support, whether you choose to birth at home, in hospital or birth centre.
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As an ex-nanny, I can help look after older siblings so that Mum can focus on birthing. Dad can focus on Mum, and older sister or brother can still feel important and included in the process, without fear.
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Jenny Schellhorn: Doula. Childbirth & Early Parenting Educator. Pre Natal Yoga Teacher
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www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

BIRTHING SERVICES: MIDWIVES

Homebirth Access Sydney provides a list of midwives currently offering homebirth services in the Sydney area and a list of questions to ask when interviewing them on our website. Midwives are listed when they agree to sign up their clients for a year's membership of HAS. Listing does not imply endorsement by HAS.

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Akal Khalsa has been offering her individualised midwifery care to women in Sydney since 1979. She will provide experienced, comprehensive and personalised care throughout your pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. With Akal as your midwife you will be assured of professional care and full and accurate information throughout this vital time. She is available by phone, 24 hours, 7 days a week. Akal has over 30 years experience as a midwife and childbirth educator and will help you and your partner prepare emotionally, mentally and physically so you can approach the birth of your baby with joy and confidence. She has many years experience with water births, lotus births and vaginal after caesarean births.

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akal@ourmidwife.com.au www.ourmidwife.com.au

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Betty Vella (GyMEA) 9540 4992 bpvella@optushome.com.au

THE ELLA MAY CENTRE

The Ella May Centre provides an alternative to the medical management of fertility, pregnancy, birth and beyond by providing Midwifery and Naturopathic care to prospective and expecting families. Your midwife will provide you with individualised care throughout the preconception, pregnancy, birth and postnatal periods and is on call 24 hours a day.

The Ella May Centre supports you to birth in the way and place of your choosing. For full details of services please visit our website or book a free information appointment.

Melanie Jackson (Western Suburbs & Blue Mountains)
0425 280 682 www.ellamaycentre.com

HAZEL KEEDLE

I have attended homebirths as a midwife and have been a practising midwife for over 3 years. I have attended the homebirth midwives retreat in 2008 and also an active birth workshop. I have qualifications in massage, aromatherapy and infant massage. I have recently obtained Cert IV Breastfeeding Education (Counselling) with the Australian Breastfeeding Association and Childbirth Education training. I am passionate about keeping birth natural and providing continued care from pregnancy through to birth and during the newborn time. I have

a keen interest in women achieving vaginal births after a caesarean (VBAC) in part due to my own personal experience of VBAC. I am a local mountains mum with a family including five children.

Hazel Keedle (Blue Mountains and surrounding areas)
4787 8430 0408 661 503 hazelkeedle@gmail.com

INDEPENDENT MIDWIFE: JACQUI WOOD

Pregnancy and birth is a normal, healthy life experience. As natural as it is to conceive your baby in a loving, safe and intimate environment, labouring and birthing at home, in your own relaxed setting, gives you the freedom to follow your body's instinctive knowledge of birthing naturally, without restrictions. As a Midwife, I have immense passion for my career and gain great professional and personal satisfaction from it. I offer a holistic approach to midwifery care, providing care throughout your pregnancy, labour and birth (a birthing pool is available for water birth) and postnatal care up to 4 weeks after the birth of your baby. All care is provided in your home.

Jacqui Wood (Blue Mountains, Western Sydney and South West suburbs)
0430 109 400
www.independentmidwife.com.au jacqui@independentmidwife.com.au

JO HUNTER: HOMEBIRTH MIDWIFE

I believe that women should be placed at the centre of their own experience, supported to empower themselves with knowledge and skills, given time and

encouragement from their midwife, as well as being surrounded by those they love and people who believe and trust in their ability to birth. It is the midwives role to have patience and trust in the innate ability of women and babies and to be comfortable and confident to support this process in any setting the woman chooses. Pregnancy, birth and postnatal care up to 6 weeks is provided in your home. I live in The Blue Mountains and service local families, inner west and western Sydney.

Blue Mountains, Inner west and Western Sydney (02) 475 19840
midwifejo@bigpond.com

NEW BEGINNINGS MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

New Beginnings Midwifery Practice offers a personalised approach to pregnancy, birth and beyond. Receive comprehensive prenatal care with your own midwife. New Beginnings can assist you with homebirth, hospital birth or birth centre birth. Extensive postnatal visits. Access to information, resources and a large lending library. Care and support available 24 hours a day.

Robyn Dempsey (North Ryde) 9888 7829
midwiferobyn@optusnet.com.au www.homebirthmidwives.com.au

PREGNANCY, BIRTH & BEYOND

Looking for special care during your pregnancy, birth and as new parents? Receive personalised, professional care by an experienced midwife. Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond supports women and their families birthing at home, birth centre or hospital. Midwifery care helps you avoid unnecessary interventions and to be recognised as the most important member of the birth team. Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond aims to assist families achieve an empowering birth experience. For full details of services please visit our website.

Jane Palmer (Dundas Valley) 9873 1750
jane@pregnancy.com.au www.pregnancy.com.au

SONJA MACGREGOR

A wholistic midwife who empowers and trusts a woman to birth her own baby in the comfort of her own home, surrounded by love. I provide a full antenatal, labour, birth and postnatal service in collaboration with the woman. Appointments are attended in the woman's home, with the inclusion of family and support people if the woman desires. I service Sydney, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, Illawarra, Central Coast & Newcastle.

Sonja MacGregor 0419 149 019
sonjamac@bigpond.com www.birthathome.com.au

ST GEORGE HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH SERVICE

This public health service is available to women in the St George and Sutherland Shire area. Continuity of care is provided by two midwives throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

For further information, call the Birth Centre on 9113 3103.

WITH WOMAN MIDWIFERY CARE

I am an independent midwife based in Shellharbour. I provide continuity of midwifery care throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period to women planning to birth at home. All visits take place in the woman's home at a time that suits the family. Areas covered include the Illawarra, Southern Highlands, Southern Sydney, Shoalhaven and Canberra.

Rachele Meredith 0421 721 497
rachele@withwoman.com.au
www.withwoman.com.au

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH SERVICE

This public health service is available to women in the Helensburgh to Kiama region. Continuity of care is provided by two midwives throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. Contact the Antenatal Clinic on 42534256 and ask to book in with the Midwifery Group Practice (MGP). Your details will be taken down and MGP will return your call.

GUIDE TO CHOOSING A MIDWIFE

For a downloadable list of these questions to ask your midwife, please go to the 'Find A Midwife' page on our website.

Different midwives have different personalities and practices, and different midwives are right for different women. Finding the right midwife for you is your responsibility. When selecting your midwife, we recommend you:

- Interview as many midwives as you can
- Talk to as many of their clients as you can

Here are some questions you might consider asking midwives you are considering for your care:

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Are you registered?
- How long have you been practising?
- Where did you train and when?
- Do you do regular continuing education? What about refresher courses and extra skills courses?
- Have you had any long periods away from practice? If so, what did you do to update your skills and knowledge?
- Do you have regular peer review of your midwifery practice?
- Did you work in a hospital setting and then become a homebirth midwife? When?
- Do you combine hospital shift work and a homebirth practice?
- How many births have you attended as primary caregiver?
- How many of these were at hospital? In a birth centre? At home?
- How many births per year and per month do you attend?
- Do you have a specialty area of practice?
- What is your rate of transfer to hospital? Rate of caesarean section? Rate of assisted delivery?
- Have you ever had to resuscitate a baby?
- Has a baby ever died under your care? What were the circumstances?
- Are you certified in neonatal resuscitation? Do you carry oxygen to the birth?

ELIGIBILITY

- Are you registered as an eligible midwife?
- Can I claim Medicare for pre and post natal services?
- How much will I get back from Medicare per visit?
- Can you prescribe antibiotics, vitamin K etc?
- Do you have a collaborative relationship with a GP or obstetrician?
- Do you have midwife visiting rights to my local hospital?

PHILOSOPHY AND ATTITUDE

- Why did you become a midwife?
- What do you perceive your role to be - during my pregnancy, during my labour, after the baby is born? How does your practice vary for different women?
- Do you see yourself as actively involved in a woman's labour? How? (Some midwives prefer to sit back and let you do it with your birth support people, others will become actively involved if you want that and talk to you, massage, hold heat packs)
- What is your attitude to complementary therapies such as homeopathics, acupuncture, etc
- What is your attitude to circumcision? Immunisation?
- What do you expect regarding self-care during pregnancy?
- What is your view on nutrition and weight gain during pregnancy?

COLLABORATION/TEAM

- Will you provide all my midwifery care or will others be involved?
- What are your back-up arrangements if you are not available to provide my care?
Do you work with a regular second midwife?
- If you work alone, what happens if two women go into labour at the same time? What is your backup system? If you work with other midwives, when can I meet them?
- Are there any collaboration requirements with doctors, obstetricians or others? Do you have any collaboration agreements? If so, with whom? Please explain how these will work, how the team collaborates and how much each element will cost. How does collaboration affect my care and specifically continuity of care? When will I meet these people?
- Who will you bring with you to the birth?
- What is your experience of working with doulas? Do you prefer

a woman to have a doula at birth? Do you have any doulas with whom you regularly work?

- What will happen if I need to see a specialist during my pregnancy or labour?
- What will happen if my baby needs to see a specialist?
- In what circumstances would you recommend my baby see a pediatrician or doctor?

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Legal, contractual, financial

- What do you charge for your services and what does that cover? Is it a lump sum or segmented for different phases of care? Will there be a written contract?
- When do you expect payment? Is there flexibility?
- What rebates are available?
- What happens if we discontinue our relationship during my pregnancy? For example, if I don't want you to be my midwife anymore, if there is a medical situation that recommends against my having a homebirth, or if you are unwilling or unable to continue my care? Will you refer me? How will the finances work?
- Please explain the current situation regarding professional indemnity insurance and how it affects my care or our relationship.

TIMING

- What happens if two clients are in labor at the same time? How many clients do you have due around the same time as me? Will you take on more?
- Do you combine hospital shift work and a homebirth practice? What if you're working when I am in labour?
- Are you likely to be away when my baby is due?

SPECIFIC ISSUES...

...DURING PREGNANCY

- Where will the prenatal appointments be? What do they include? How long will they take? How many antenatal visits do you recommend, and why?
- How and when can I contact you if I need help or advice during the come up between visits?
- In what circumstances would you transfer me to obstetrical care for during pregnancy? What is your rate of prenatal transfer?
- What is your attitude to 'due dates' and how would you feel about my pregnancy going over 40 weeks? What would your advice be?
- How do you feel about natural induction methods? Can you offer any of these services?
- What would you do in the case that I was having twins? Had a breech baby?
- What prenatal tests do you require? What do you recommend? Do you have an obstetrician to whom you refer?
- Do you provide education as I prepare for the birth? Do you have a lending library of books/DVDs?

...DURING LABOUR AND BIRTH

- In what circumstances do you recommend transfer to hospital? How often do your clients transfer and for what reasons? Do you stay with your clients who transfer? In what capacity?
- Do I need a backup booking with the hospital? Which one? What is involved in this? If it's a private hospital, do I need private health insurance?
- What equipment do you provide (eg birth pool)? What must I provide?
- How and how regularly will you monitor the baby during labour?
- Do you support me labouring in water? Birthing in water?
- What do you do in the event of a long labor? A "stalled" labor? Do you stay? Go away and come back? In what circumstances?
- When will you come to me after I begin labor? Have you ever missed a birth?
- How often do you perform an episiotomy?
- What is your attitude towards premature rupture of membranes (PROM)?
- How long do you wait to cut the cord after the baby is born?
- Do you support lotus birth?
- What do you do if there is a post partum hemorrhage?
- What procedures do you perform immediately on the newborn? What can wait? Will you wait if I request it?
- How long will you stay after I give birth?

...DURING THE POSTNATAL PERIOD

- What is the schedule of post-natal visits? Where will they be? What do they include? How long will they take?
- Will you help me with breastfeeding? If so for how many weeks?
- How do I get my baby's birth certificate?



27th Homebirth Australia Conference

CHALLENGING THE BOUNDARIES

19-21 AUGUST 2011
NEWCASTLE CITY HALL

www.homebirthaustralia.org

Speakers include Robbie Davis-Floyd
Put it in your diary now! More details coming soon



HOME BIRTH
AUSTRALIA

HOME BIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY (INC)

- 1) To create an awareness in the community of planned attended homebirth as an accessible and attainable alternative and to be actively involved in maintaining homebirth as a choice and improvement of conditions for homebirthers. In the interest of furthering the cause of homebirth, our public relations policy will be one of assertive, non-aggressive approach.
- 2) To provide an information and referral service by way of newsletters, pamphlets, telephone contacts, a permanent mailbox, a reference library and regular public meetings.
- 3) To provide support to HAS members by holding regular public meetings and maintaining and publicising a list of contact phone numbers and addresses.
- 4) To represent HAS members on or to any regulatory or advisory body, Local, State or Federal, which is formulating policy or implementing decisions which affect homebirth.
- 5) To work with other homebirth groups and other groups concerned with birthing to further the aims of HAS.
- 6) To be involved in public gatherings that are relevant to and consistent with HAS' aim regarding homebirth.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND Homebirth Access Sydney (HAS) Committee Meetings

From 10.30am. Second Tuesday of every month

AUSTRALIAN DOULA COLLEGE

422 Marrickville Rd Marrickville

Bring a plate or something to nibble.

Children welcome.

Please call to confirm

Virginia Maddock 0415 683 074

NEXT MEETINGS:

14th June, 12th July, 9th August.

HAS POLICY STATEMENT

This policy statement was written because of the need to promote unity and understanding among our homebirth members and the wider community.

- 1) Homebirth Access Sydney is an organization which was established in 1973 to provide information and support to those interested in homebirth our members include parents, birth attendants, educators and midwives.
- 2) HAS recognises that Australian families have the right to have their baby in any setting – be it their home, a clinic, a birth centre or a hospital.
- 3) The members of HAS believe that home is a safe place to give birth and that there will always be an element of risk in birth whatever the choice of birth place.
- 4) Families who choose homebirth are taking a shared responsibility in the births of their babies. They are opting for a birth outside of an institution and its model of mass health care which is restrictive and frequently denies individuals requirements.
- 5) The midwives who attend homebirths are specialists, educated to provide total care throughout pregnancy, labour and the post-natal period. They consult with other health practitioners when appropriate.
- 6) Midwives are accountable to their clients and their peers (through quality assurance and standards review) as well as the Dept. of Health, the Nurses Registration Board, the Australian College of Midwives and the various courts.
- 7) With the widespread misconceptions about the safety of homebirth, a homebirth midwife's professional status is in jeopardy whenever anything goes wrong. However skilled she may be, deregistration and loss of career is a constant insecurity in the face of social hostility to her chosen profession.
- 8) Birth is an intense, emotional, life changing experience. In the event of conflict or unresolved issues, HAS encourages mediation and conciliation between all parties whatever the birth place and whoever the birth attendants.

MAGAZINE ADVERTISING RATES

	Single (1 Issue)	Annual (4 issues)
Service Pages		
Doula Listing	n/a	\$25
Services Listing	n/a	\$35
Advertisements		
Business Card Display	\$20	\$70
Quarter Page Display	\$30	\$110
Half Page Display	\$40	\$150
Full Page Display	\$65	\$250

For print and online advertising please email Karen
advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au

HAS ABN 75 947 458 113

HAS MISSION STATEMENT

Homebirth Access Sydney is a viable and visible organisation working with integrity to support mothers and families' rights to informed and empowered home birth.

Calendar

JUNE

Wednesday 1st

Inner West Homebirth Support Group

Time: from 10am

Location: changes every week so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.

Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776

Bring a healthy snack if you like.

Every Thursday

Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group

Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm

Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah (North)

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Whether you're pregnant or have babies or kids in tow, come on over; let the kids run amok and enjoy a cuppa and some fresh baked delights with some like-minded mamas.

Thursday 2nd

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Friday 3rd

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30-12pm

Location: Killcare General Store, 54 Araluen Drive, Hardys Bay

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

All welcome, especially those mamas who tried to homebirth but got transferred.

Tuesday 14th

HAS Committee meeting

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Location: Australian Doula College, 422 Marrickville Road Marrickville

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirth-sydney.org.au

All welcome including kids.

Thursday 16th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Monday 20th

Illawarra Birth Choices Group

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Topic: Topic and guest speaker to be confirmed.

Location: Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale.

Contact: Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

Thursday 23rd

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting

Theme: Baby wearing and slings.

Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.

Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au.

Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

Thursday 30th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

JULY

Friday 1st

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30-12pm

Location: Gnostic Cafe, Cnr Chambers Place & The Boulevard, Woy Woy

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

All welcome, especially those mamas who tried to homebirth but got transferred.

Wednesday 6th

Inner West Homebirth Support Group

Time: from 10am

Location: changes every week so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.

Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776

Bring a healthy snack if you like.

Every Thursday

Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group

Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm

Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah (North)

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Whether you're pregnant or have babies or kids in tow, come on over; let the kids run amok and enjoy a cuppa and some fresh baked delights with some like-minded mamas.

Tuesday 12th

HAS Committee meeting

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Location: Australian Doula College, 422 Marrickville Road Marrickville

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirth-sydney.org.au

All welcome including kids.

Monday 18th

Illawarra Birth Choices Group

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Topic: Topic and guest speaker to be confirmed.

Location: Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale.

Contact: Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

Thursday 28th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Thursday 28th

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting

Theme: Open forum.

Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.

Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to

a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au.
Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

AUGUST

Monday 1st

Spring Birthings submissions due: Topic "Gender"
Email editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

Wednesday 3rd

Inner West Homebirth Support Group
Time: from 10am

Location: changes every week so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.

Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776

Bring a healthy snack if you like.

Every Thursday

Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group

Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm

Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah (North)

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Whether you're pregnant or have babies or kids in tow, come on over; let the kids run amok and enjoy a cuppa and some fresh baked delights with some like-minded mamas.

Friday 5th

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30-12pm

Location: Bamboo Buddha, 221 Wattle Tree Rd, Holgate

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

All welcome, especially those mamas who tried to homebirth but got transferred.

Tuesday 9th

HAS Committee meeting

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Location: Australian Doula College, 422 Marrickville Road Marrickville

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirthsydney.org.au

All welcome including kids.

Thursday 11th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@

bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Monday 15th

Illawarra Birth Choices Group

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Topic: Topic and guest speaker to be confirmed.

Location: Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale.

Contact: Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

Thursday 25th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Thursday 25th

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting

Theme: Labour including pre-labour, long labour, expectations of labour and labour strategies.

Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.

Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au.

Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

SEPTEMBER

Every Thursday

Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group

Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm

Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah (North)

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Whether you're pregnant or have babies or kids in tow, come on over; let the kids run amok and enjoy a cuppa and some fresh baked delights with some like-minded mamas.

Friday 2nd

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30-12pm

Location: Killcare General Store, 54 Araluen Drive, Hardys Bay

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

All welcome, especially those mamas who tried to homebirth but got transferred.

Wednesday 7th

Inner West Homebirth Support Group

Time: from 10am

Location: changes every week so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.

Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776

Bring a healthy snack if you like.

Thursday 8th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Tuesday 13th

HAS Committee meeting

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Location: Australian Doula College, 422 Marrickville Road Marrickville

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirthsydney.org.au

All welcome including kids.

Monday 19th

Illawarra Birth Choices Group

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Topic: Topic and guest speaker to be confirmed.

Location: Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale.

Contact: Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

Thursday 22nd

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting

Theme: Vaccination.

Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.

Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au.

Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

The topic for the next issue is:

Gender



Birthings is your magazine. Please contribute!

Submissions are welcome on anything to do with the topic of Gender. Some suggestions can be found in the editorial on page 5.

As always, we also welcome your birth announcements, birth stories,
letters (please!), art and poetry.

Submissions are due by August 1st 2011.

Please check word count before sending.

Email the editor at: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

Reminder: Please ensure we have your current email address so you can receive your membership expiry reminder, as well as all the important homebirth updates in our e-newsletter. And if you've recently moved, send us your new address so you don't miss out on the next issue of Birthings!

Email: member@homebirthsydney.org.au