

BIRTHINGS

a HOMEBIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY quarterly publication
www.homebirthsydney.org.au



Midwife Mother Relationship

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

Summer 2009 Issue 104

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 Sarah McLean 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

Autumn 2010 No 105—1 February 2010
Winter 2010 No 106 - 1 May 2010
Spring 2010 No 107—1 August 2010
Summer 2011 No 108—1 November 2010

back issues

Back issues of *Birthings* are like hen's teeth! But we will try to accommodate requests. Back issues cost \$7.00 per issue. Postage is \$3.00 per single copy. A price for multiple copies can be arranged. The newsletters are very valuable in that they contain 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

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*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*.

Contributing to Birthings

The strength of *Birthings* is all the thought-provoking, 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, Danielle Townsend and the current editor, Sarah McLean. 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 Sarah McLean 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.

HONOURARY LIFE AND FOUNDING MEMBERS

Maggie
Lecky-Thompson
Elaine
Odgers Norling

HONOURARY LIFE MEMBERS

Robyn Dempsey
Jo Hunter

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BIRTHINGS

Midwife-Mother Relationship

regulars

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www.homebirthsydney.org.au



Photo: Ally Sancjez



Image: www.baby-gaga.com

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:** \$15 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 send your completed form to:
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- \$40 for new membership (1 year)
- \$40 for renewal membership (1 year)
- \$15 for midwife client membership (1 year)

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* Note: Your User Name and Password allow us to add you to our online database. User Name eg. your full name. Password may be changed when you login.

Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if receipt is required.

Enquiries: sales@homebirthsydney.org.au

Contributors

AMELIA ALLAN is mother to Raphael (5) Gabriel (2) and Julia (8 months), all born at home, with the same wonderful birth team. These experiences, and the life lived with these little and big people is of the greatest ever treasure, to be wished on every birthing woman. Amelia is a yoga teacher (on long leave!) and enjoys poetry, esoteric and spiritual investigation, rainshowers and a good cuppa! She is grateful to many wonderful people for their nourishment and friendship, and is learning to be grateful for her self too.

SUZEE BRAIN is mother to Ally (7), Zoe (6) and Indigo (12 weeks), who was born at home. Suzee is a Director of an international retail consulting firm and lives with her husband Gavin on a peaceful 18 acres in Wildes Meadow in the Southern Highlands of NSW.

VICTORIA KLEEBERG is a homebirth midwife, herbalist, nutritionist and Buteyko practitioner.

ALI MAEGRAITH is a certified male baby maker as mum to Jedediah, Jonah, Gabriel and Asher (in heaven). She is a singer/songwriter and will have her first EP out next year. Ali he has attended over 10 births as a doula and is currently exploring the significance of birthing as a Chrisitan

SARAH MCLEAN is mother to Jack (8yrs), Ruby (7yrs going on 21) and Stella (7 months old) - her two girls born at home. She is a student midwife and current editor of Birthings after going part-time at uni to have her third baby. She is passionate believer on birthing at home and the power it has to forge strong families.

JOSS MOSS is an artist and full-time mother to a blossoming three-year old. She lives in nature with her partner, Mason; their daughter ,Koko; their kelpie, Miso and a growing flock of alpacas. They are based in the northern tablelands of New South Wales, surrounded by trees, birds, flowers and the cacophony of cicadas.

JAIA SHANTI BAER is the mother of Ruby (10-months-old) and partner of Mark. She is a yoga teacher, doula, moon gazer and nature lover. She is currently studying the Bachelor of Midwifery at UTS.

GRETA WERNER is a mother to Ruby (10), Kurtis (4) and baby girl Sophia. Kurtis and Sophia were both born at home. Greta has studied architecture and design and combined this with her passion for raising environmental awareness by establishing a sustainable kitchen and furniture design business for 5 years. She was Treasurer of the Society for Responsible Design for three years and has just taken the role of Secretary for Homebirth Access Sydney.

VIRGINIA MADDOCK is a passionate herbalist, nutritionist and doula. Her business Natural Beginnings, focuses on natural fertility, pregnancy, birth, postnatal and children's health. www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

Birthings is designed by **PETRA TIMMERMANN**

editorial



SARAH MCLEAN

Well it has been quite a three months for homebirthing with the 'Mother of All Rallies' held in Canberra, major political developments that seem to change daily and still an uncertain future ahead of us.

Alison has summed up the events of the past three months beautifully for us in 'Personal is Political' on page 32. Not an easy task when you realise just how complex the political processes of parliament are! A huge thankyou to Alison Leemen, Danni Townsend and Jo Tilly for working so tirelessly to negotiate this complex world and lobbying on behalf of HAS members. I think we are incredibly lucky to have these intelligent and articulate women keeping up the pressure and speaking on our behalf.

This edition of *Birthings* is all about the Midwife-Mother relationship. There is a lovely story by Joss Moss about her journey to motherhood with her midwife Akal. I have written a piece about

my own experiences of being a student midwife, which is often in conflict with my own beliefs about birthing and as a homebirthing woman.

Included is also a great follow up story from a previous *Birthings* edition on sex from Ali Maegraith. I am sure you will find it a really interesting read, as did I!

I received so many fantastic photos from the 'Mother of All Rallies' so I have tried to include as many as possible. Victoria Kleeberg has written a story about her experience of the day. Seriously I could have done a whole magazine on the rally as it was such an amazing, epic day for so many of us and I am sure I could fill it with personal accounts and stories I have heard since!

Finally, we have three beautiful birth stories from Suzee Brain, Greta Werner and Amelia Allan.

Take care
— Sarah xox

New and renewed members Thank you for your continued support.

Sally Whitson	Melia Farrell	Catherine Gregory	Vanessa Voigt	Suksiri Sitdigowit
Louisa Gundemann	Rochelle Allan	Catherine and	Chrissy Seymour-Weekes	Anna Augul
Monica Renaud	Claire Wilson	Ivan Logvina	Krystal De Lima	Wy'el Lennon
Stacey Christie-David	Lynette Grech	Justine Quinn	Rachel Nixon	Emma Peric
Ally Sanchez	Carla Cromie	Jocelyn Spak	Kirilee Heartman	Michelle Clinch
Meredith Mckay	Jane Ainsworth	Andrea Smith	Stephanie Stoddard	Sam Morgan
Marion Schlegel	Jenny Schellhorn	Terry Georgeson	Hazel Gardner	Susan Farr
Nada Mikas	Christina Nagle	Aniko Elharon	Krsnarupa	Ella Whyman
Lydia Walton	Regina Powers	Adiine Bigelow	Janna Mizens	Bronwyn Lin
Lisa Filorenko	Melodie Glass	Amanda Vella	Keren Peter	Monica Renaud
Jennifer Jamieson	Melissa Maimann	Martina Kreznovic	Jesselle Hopkins	Nerissa Walsh

BIRTHINGS EDITORIAL TEAM & DESIGNER WANTED

This will be my penultimate edition as managing editor of *Birthings* as I will be returning to uni next year to finish my midwifery degree. So in preparation for this I am calling for anyone who would be interested in taking on an editorial role for the magazine. I have really enjoyed working on *Birthings* and have found the workload very manageable. You would need to feed back to the committee on what you are doing in terms of themes and any developments within HAS so ideally it would be good if you can attend one meeting per quarter. There is currently a team of four of us who pull the magazine together and edit stories.

Petra is also leaving due to additional work commitments so we are looking for a designer to lay up the magazine quarterly in the current template.

Please contact me at editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

birth announcements



Greta, Paul, Ruby and Kurtis welcome

Sophia Elenni Angylian

Born 9 August 2009

Sophia was born at home in water surrounded by her dad, big brother and sister, doula and midwife. She was protected by her amniotic sack which remained intact during the birth and was removed afterward.

A huge thank you to our wonderful midwife Jan and amazing friend Zoe for being there for us, and letting our baby enter the world in a gentle, loving way. We are lucky and thankful for having such an uncomplicated birth and healthy baby.



Jo, Penny, Alan, Adrian, Gemima and Red are delighted to announce the birth of their new daughter and sister Pippi.

Pip Delilah Tilly

Born 24th October 2009

After a false start and a brisk walk in the park, Pippi was born just after 5pm on October 24th into the pool in her mums' bedroom with her family all looking on. She was 3.4kg, 50cm long and has a full head of hair.

Thanks to Jacqui for her calm professionalism and reminding us again just why we need midwives to be the guardians of birth.



Jacquie, Micah and Big Brother Logan Welcome

Brock Lukas Harsh

Born 10th October 2009

After a lovely busy spring day Brock Lukas decided it was finally time for his arrival!

Whilst Big brother Logan played with Nanny and ate all sorts of treats, Mummy labored in the bath with Daddys loving support and reassurance.

After a short straightforward labor, and some intense contractions our little boy arrived through the water into his Daddys arms at 6:27pm weighing 3.62kg, and measuring 55cm long, just a wee bit bigger than what his brother was.

After Brock let out a burst of very loud crying announcing his arrival Big Brother Logan and Nanny Del came into the bathroom to welcome our newest little blessing.

We are all so pleased to have experience the miracle of Homebirth once again, and to be able to all snuggle into bed after dinner and fall asleep cuddling next to each other as a new family of 4!

We are so thankful for the protection and health we have all been blessed with this time around, and for the constant love and support received from our Midwife Sonja and Doula Natalie ... to have your presence once again at our second birth was so comforting, it would not have been the same without you both! You are both truly amazing people and a much appreciated extension to our growing family!

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

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heart to heart

POETRY AND ARTWORK

Midwife By Jaia Shanti Baer

She is with me
She shadows my dance
And I glow

She holds the mirror
I see my light
I trust in this flow

She is the gate-keeper
My journey is blessed
I surrender and let go

She is with me
She holds the space
In which we meet
We're safe, I know

We invite you to share your birth-inspired creative expressions with others by submitting your pieces to ameliaa@primus.com.au. The emphasis is in the spirit of sharing and connection rather than in artistic perfection!

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Tree

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Birth is not only about making babies. Birth is about making mothers – strong, competent, capable mothers who trust themselves and know their inner strength." Barbara Katz Rothman

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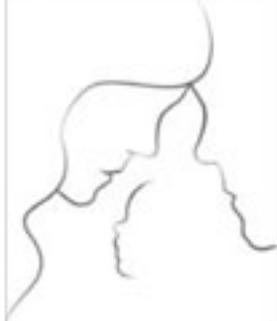
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coordinator's report



JO TILLY

I am sitting here writing in the stillness of the early morning, broken by the chattering of the birds and the chooks loudly announcing their morning eggs. In years gone by this wasn't a part of the day I had a lot of time for (unless I was on my way home from a long evening's entertainment). But there is something pretty compelling about watching the sun come up. Cuddling a tiny baby as a new day dawns provides plenty of opportunity for insightful thoughts about things like new beginnings and transience. Or maybe that's just the combination of new mother hormones and sleep deprivation... There's something about watching the dawn that feels incredibly special, every time you see it, even though you know it's an ordinary thing that happens everywhere in the world, every day.

Birth is kind of the same. Having our babies at home just reinforces that birth is just a part of ordinary life – at the same time as such an extraordinary, life changing experience. Having kids around for the birth of their siblings particularly makes you realise that normal life doesn't

stop when you give birth. My five year old was particularly interested in being involved in his baby sister's birth and kept coming in to bring me drinks and show me things and sing me songs. Being in our own space with our families around us and part of the whole process makes birth a part of life in a way that having a baby in a hospital surrounded by strangers never could.

I wonder if the midwives who support us through our pregnancies and labours and have seen many hundreds of births still find it so special and extraordinary. Apart from my own births I have had the privilege of sharing in the births of 2 of my friends which were pretty mind blowing. I can't quite imagine what it would be like to be witness to such amazing events every day.

The care that homebirthing mums get from their midwives is the gold standard in health care. And homebirth families as a result are incredibly supportive of the midwives who they have come to know and develop such good relationships with. As someone who has spent many years working in public policy, I can tell you people are very good at complaining about things they don't like but not so about telling you about the good service they have experienced. Clients of privately practising midwives are a vocal exception.

It is this loud support from consumers that makes the Federal Government's insistence on making homebirth more and more difficult even more perplexing. Baby Pippi recently attended her first rally outside Tanya Plibersek's office in Sydney to protest the government's latest efforts that will make homebirth even harder to access, at the ripe old age of two weeks. (For more details about the latest developments see Alison's report in 'Personal is Political')

Having now had two of my babies at home with the care of two wonderful midwives, it

has just reinforced that this is the standard of care that all Australian women deserve. Not every woman – probably not even the majority of women – will want to birth their babies at home but we should all be entitled to care from a health professional we know and trust throughout our pregnancies and labours. In continuing to compromise with wishes of the Australian Medical Association, the Government has watered down it's own initiatives on midwife led care to the extent that they will be completely unworkable and women will continue to be denied the continuity of care which we deserve. It continues to astonish me that the Government says it wants to make these changes for the benefit of Australian mothers and yet the only people they seem to be showing any determination to protect are doctors.

As 2009 draws to a close I would like to thank all of you who have been helping with this campaign – who have dragged your families around the state to protest, who have written submissions and letters, who have met your MPs and continued to speak out publicly about the importance of midwife led care and protecting birth at home. It has been a huge (and frustrating!) effort for all of us. A special thanks to the HAS Committee team for all your work this year and especially Alison and Danni who have shouldered a lot of the lobbying work over the last 12 months, particularly while I have been distracted recently with my new bubba. The efforts of every mother involved in this campaign says more about the midwife-mother relationship than we ever could in one issue of Birthings.

Take some time out for you and your family this Christmas season. Let's hope that the drama of 2009 will come to an end and that 2010 brings a new beginning for homebirth.

- Jo



The (Student) Midwife-Mother Relationship

SARAH MCLEAN

I wanted to share a few of my own thoughts on the road to being a midwife and how this has shaped my current views on midwifery care and reinforced my belief in the power that homebirth can have in making strong mothers and strong families.

I had my second baby at home in the UK on the National Health Service (NHS), in a team midwifery model with six community midwives in which I rarely saw the same midwife twice. I met five of them during the pregnancy but the one who turned up at my house for the birth was the one I had never met before. She was kind and I didn't know any different. The birth was fast, straightforward and James and I just got on with it. Good postnatal care followed at home over the next week.

Third time around I was lucky enough to receive midwifery care one-on-one from a midwife at home, which is in another league altogether – the gold standard of care as they say! Having a homebirth is not just about location; it is about building a relationship with a trusted midwife and sharing that experience together. It really felt like we were on a journey. Even though this was my third baby, I still found myself asking (often silly) questions of Jacqui, that I actually knew the answer to on some level, but needed to ask them and be the mother and not the (student) midwife. I didn't need to have all the answers and often didn't seem to know the road map. Being on the receiving end of care from my midwife allowed me to be vulnerable and sometimes scared and unsure, and in turn, open myself emotionally to the process and not be academic about it. I needed reassurance from my midwife and for her to be my guide.

So much midwifery care that I have seen at the hospital is about being in charge and 'managing' the birth and yet with Jacqui, I truly felt like we walked that road together with her as my guide but me an equal with her. This togetherness of 'being with women' is talked about a lot at university in lectures and yet I have rarely seen this in my clinical practice. Homebirth midwifery achieves this with ease. It is personal and it is individual care. Not care delivered based on what is best for the masses.

As a student midwife, I have learnt a lot about anatomy, physiology, labour, birth, postnatal care, breastfeeding and the many tangents that pregnancy can take, however all this information is not actually what you need going into labour.

Birth is not a cerebral academic event for which doing all the homework in the world can get you brownie points. Birth is a basic, primal event that can take you to your depths, your heights and your limits. The love that you feel for your baby from the minute you realise you are

pregnant, makes the whole journey one of intense emotion beyond what you ever feel day to day. Being able to look to someone for reassurance and guidance on this journey is what a midwife can best do for women. They not only have the knowledge, but they have the capacity to view birthing holistically and not simply as the sum of the parts.

Nadine Pilley Edwards in *The Midwife-Mother Relationship* (2000), studied a group of home birthing women and found that they wanted their midwife to have supportive midwifery practices which would enable them to focus on normality, decrease their fear and increase their trust and confidence in their ability to birth. They wanted care that could support their spiritual and emotional as well as their physical needs. They wanted supportive qualities in their midwives, to listen to, respect and accept their ideals and to give them clear information to base their decisions and expand their own knowledge of birth. And they wanted maternity care to be organised in ways that could facilitate all of the above by enabling them to get to know and trust their midwives. This all seems very reasonable and yet how often do these boxes get ticked within the public health system.

This study was within the context of the public health system where the community midwives who attended the births were ultimately employed by the hospital and were bound by the policies of those institutions. Many of the women felt that ultimately their midwives were on the medical side and that often the midwives brought the 'hospital into the home'. Private midwifery can avoid this medicalisation of homebirth.

People talk about homebirth midwives needing more advanced clinical skills than hospital midwives and to a certain extent this is true. However practicing midwifery at home is not simply about a change of location – it is a fundamentally different approach to midwifery care. Hospital based midwives have a limited ability to actually provide midwifery care as they are often preoccupied by clinical nursing tasks that demand their attention rather than actually 'being with women'. And ultimately they are working within a medical model of care.

New Zealand midwife Maggie Banks in *Homebirth Bound* (2000), discusses the two different models of maternity care - the midwifery model and the medical model that are based on separate and distinct philosophies. One views pregnancy and birth as normal, physiological processes and the other that birth can only be viewed normal in retrospect. One views birth as labour intensive opposed to

technologically intensive. One is holistic, supportive, preventative and working with nature, whilst the other crisis-oriented based on a masculine concept of exploiting and dominating nature.

Maggie also talks about the Wise Woman Tradition, which exemplifies the participants – the woman and her baby and the homebirth midwife. Each of the women are visible and come to the relationship with their own knowledge and wisdom. Maggie talks about how homebirth can return the knowledge of healthy childbirth to the woman and her family. Only when this knowledge is common to childbearing families can the current medicalisation of birth be turned around. I see too many women prepared to hand over their bodies and their power to the medical model, simply because they do not feel in a position to question it or look beyond it.

Finally, Jacqui (a NZ trained midwife by the way) was my mentor as well. I have learnt from her approach, which was quite different from what I had observed in my clinical practice. Receiving care from Jacqui opened up a whole new world to me. Her approach to all aspects of midwifery was always evidence based, logical and often simple. In the hospital setting, midwives are constrained by policies and protocols, which results in little questioning of practice. Policy simply has to be followed. Jacqui encouraged me to question why I thought the way I did of what I had learnt. I soon realised that in only two years I had become quite indoctrinated into the hospital way

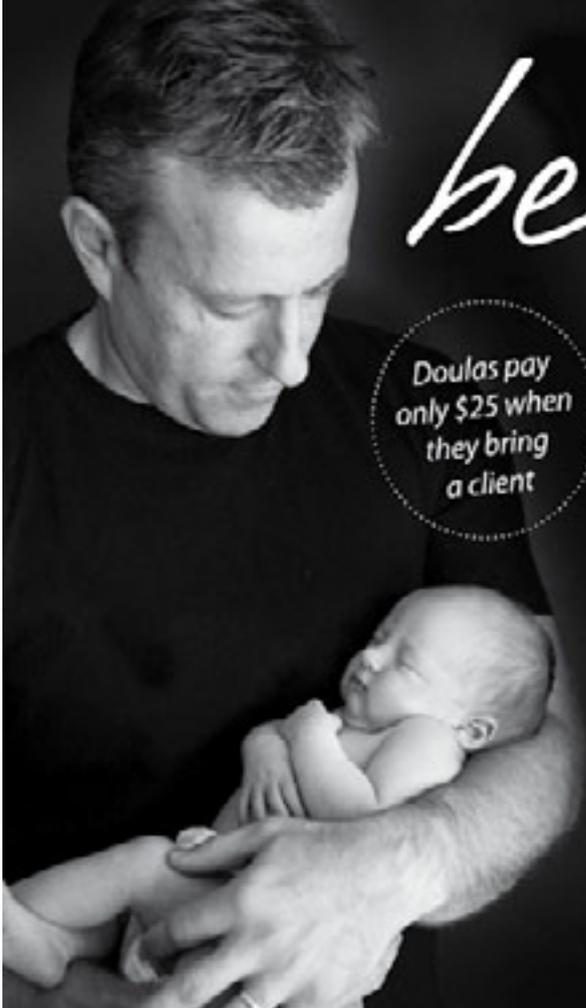
and was so busy trying to learn their ways, I had stopped questioning why they did what they did. It is easy to stop being an independent critical thinker, when you are always following policy that is imposed from above. A feeling of frustration and powerless to change practice can smother critical thinking. This shift in thinking will stand me in good stead when I go back next year to complete my studies.



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Sex and Childbirth

ALI MAEGRAITH

I waited in eager expectation for the 'Childbirth and Sex' edition of Birthings to be published and I must admit, I was quite disappointed that no one had much to say. This area is actually so important for homebirth because it is the very reason why we so stubbornly want to be at home. Us homebirthers know all about the links between childbirth and sex, the two dramatic sides to the baby making process. We are not a prudish bunch. Could we at least have had a few 'anonymous' stories? Like 'When my sister-in law's niece's neighbour was having her homebirth.....!'

When I was having my first child I was a typical first time mum. It was to be an intended natural birth in hospital with a midwife. I had the illusion that the midwife would be this glorious tower of strength holding my hand and whispering strengthening things in my ear. Well, she was a kind thoughtful woman in the few fleeting moments that she was actually in the room. It didn't take long for me to realise that if I was going to do it, I'd have to do it on my own.

At some point I was asked if a student could come and observe my birth, no problem, I said. All I can remember is being completely naked standing over the back of the bed as she walked in and letting loose the deepest most guttural contraction. We never saw the student again. This was when for the first time I realised that perhaps I was a different kind of birther. I thought, 'isn't this what you just have to do?' and 'how on earth does everyone else have their babies?'. There was just something sexual about the whole thing, and maybe not everyone is prepared to go there.

You become your true self in childbirth as you let go of your inhibitions and your defences are stripped away. Your body needs to be released to birth your baby. I'm sure I'm not the only one who feels slightly voyeuristic watching the birth video when the woman is experiencing those crowning, orgasmic contractions. For a minute you think you might be peering into her bedroom.

Birth and sex represent the two moments in a women's life when she is experiencing complete woman-ness. They are two moments that in order to occur, need the rational, analytical self to be switched off and for the essential, abandoned, in the moment woman to take centre stage.

A woman I was with in a hospital birth once, was unfortunate to have the ultimate of 'med-wives' appointed to her. This 'med-wife' should probably have been in the cardiac-ward or perhaps hospital administration. The woman's husband tenderly asked her if she would feel better if she took her top off, given she was experiencing deeper labour and would have benefited from less constriction. The embarrassed attendant responded by

telling him, 'Oh you'd like that wouldn't you?' Thankfully the mother had the boldness to detach herself from her surroundings and do whatever she needed to do to birth her baby.

But why should we ever have to deal with detaching ourselves like that? You can't have sex unless everyone else is out of the house or asleep (or significantly distracted with something- like a wiggles video!). Yet we are expected to birth our babies in all kinds of complicated and uncondusive circumstances.

The moment of childbirth is only the start. I've known women who say that they have only experienced wonderful, full orgasms after they birthed their first child. This is an ironic idea, considering the women who have caesareans because they want to stay 'honeymoon tight'.

Fear in childbirth is probably not so much fear of what may happen to you in childbirth, but fear of what your own body is capable of in childbirth. As soon as we accept that these are our very own bodies doing this incredible and awe inspiring thing, then we are free to birth confidently, with ownership. When we are overwhelmed with what our own bodies are doing and we are frightened of being trapped within a process that we are not connected with, fear takes hold. We are running away, but it's not easy to run from your own body. This is when birth becomes terrifying and we say 'give me the epidural NOW'.

The abandonment and freedom a woman has for birth is taken home with the baby and into her husband's arms. The bonds that tie a man and a women together as they leap into bed are echoed in a somewhat deeper level as the father watches his wife birthing their child. This often includes many of the same gestures and sounds that only he has seen before. The unbounded joy, fun and delight of sex are complimented by the awe, respect and honour that occur as a man and a woman experience the birth of their child together.

Who remembers those moments as labour settles in and those deep, guttural sounds start emerging? We realise that other people are hearing it too. So we switch off from what people are thinking and saying, knowing that we are in a place we can trust (even if there are little sniggers!). How many men wish to shut the ears of other birth attendants as they glimpse a little of the woman's secret world, only shared by her husband.

Disadvantaged communities such as the Innuits in Canada have found renewal and healing which has been partly to do with birth. A birth centre was established, >> meaning that women no longer had to travel great distances to have their babies and their husbands were

able to attend the births of their children. This filled the men with awe and respect for their wives. The ripple effects of this were demonstrated through the whole community.

Sex and childbirth. They are both binding, and soul tying. Both contain the absolute joy that glues people together. What can compare to the moment of reaching that ultimate orgasmic point together, than the point of pure relief experienced as a beautiful little body is birthed out into your arms?

Sex? Well isn't that a lifelong journey of discovering what our bodies are actually capable of? Of continually realising that you can love someone in deeper and different ways than you ever thought possible? Isn't sexual satisfaction found, as you are one with your body and not detached from it? Pleased and proud of the skin you are in and to top it off, loved and desired by your other? Remember the conception of your baby when you are in labour and say 'I love it that my body does this'.

Not everyone has glorious conception memories but deeply painful ones. Some women have experienced extensive sexual abuse. Sometimes babies are conceived this way. Other women are exposed to long suppressed memories of abuse. These women need special consideration and help when it comes to childbirth and with connecting to their babies. For some, the exposure and vulnerability will be almost impossible to bear. For others, the process of birth and the trust they have in the people around them can bring a true sense of acceptance and even love of their own bodies as they release themselves to birth.

Some women choose homebirth because they have a deep sense of privacy and do not wish to bare all to strangers in a hospital setting. These women will not birth in hospital because of their deep sense of

privacy and respect for their bodies. These women ought not to be forgotten.

Despite all this, there remain many who still just don't get it. There are many who still believe that that birth is a mechanical and random process. That birth is passive and not deeply active on so many levels. Next time you hear someone saying the most ignorant of lines: 'a bit different to 9 months ago eh?' you can say without doubt, 'no actually, it's quite similar'. But of course, you'll never get that opportunity because you'll probably be birthing your baby right in the very place in which she first came into existence. That is, with your own pillow, your own doona, with your husband, in your very own bed.

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BOOK review

REVIEWED BY KRISTEN BURGESS
FROM WWW.NATURALBIRTHANDBABY-CARE.COM

We're Having a Homebirth! A Children's book (USA)

BY KELLY MOCHEL
www.homebirthchildrensbook.com



It's an excellent little book. As soon as I opened the package my kids were all over me asking "Mama, mama, will you read it?!" So I read it, and we all loved it.

The book is perfectly sized for little hands and the illustrations are bright and friendly. The text is written in very child-friendly language. Your little ones will be able to understand it as you read, and a beginning reader can work through it with some help from you.

The story is written from the point of view of a "big sister" waiting on the new baby. Your child sees the inside of a big Mommy belly along with her, and takes a visit to the midwife. I really love the picture of the "Mommy belly." It's a good image for your curious little ones wondering just how their new baby is fitting inside you.

The descriptions of the midwife and her role at the baby's birth are lovely. Mochel did a wonderful job including the supportive role the midwife plays for Mommy, and how she helps the rest of the family.

There's information on what Mommy may do in labour - different positions and comfort measures (including the tub) - and noises Mommy may make. I always tried to make noises with my children before I went into labor, so they'd know what to expect. Mochel has included this in a completely open, non-threatening way for your little ones.

There are a few pages where "big sister" is watching the birth of her new baby sibling. I like the pages, which show Mommy, baby, umbilical cord, and placenta. The illustrations are simple and anatomically correct (for Mommy) and are tastefully done. Mommy is, as many homebirth mummies are, not wearing any clothes. These aren't in-depth medical diagrams, but they do show pubic hair and the baby's cord coming from Mommy. As I noted, the illustrations are tastefully done and I didn't hesitate to show them to my kids.

Note: It is very American, (Mommy!) however we decided to include it as there are so few around specifically on homebirth.

Nurturing Birth

JOSS MOSS



We live eight hours north of Sydney in the bush.

My partner and I decided that we wanted to give home birthing a go. We had the opportunity to do so at a family member's beach holiday home in Manly. From the first phone call to Akal, whom we'd found on the internet, I knew I was in the best hands possible for the journey that lay ahead. And what a journey it was.

I saw Akal every few months when I was in Sydney and supplemented the other check-ups with a local obstetrician, who supported my choice to want to have a homebirth, but, as we live remotely, it wasn't really an option in our own home.

Akal was readily available to me. Anytime I had a question or just needed to talk to someone who knew her stuff, she was only a phone call away. For a first-time mother, having that support from the start was incredible. Everything about her methodology resonated well with me and my partner Mason. She is all for allowing the mother to really experience the birth of their child. Every experience is unique. For me it was a poignant time of self-awareness, empowerment and a connection to the other women in the world who had gone through this before me. To be 'allowed' to birth like this was a true gift.

I was 16 days 'over due'. However, in a more wholistic way I knew that it was exactly the right time for our baby to be born. This was a worrying time for other members of our families as they thought I should at least get a second opinion. But my faith in our midwife, a highly experienced professional, over rode other people's perceptions; that all baby's run on the clock of the first ultrasounds prediction.

Throughout the labour, Akal was there to reassure us that all was well. I felt I had full support to be totally

free and do what I needed to do without restraints or preconceived ideas of how the labour "should be" progressing. Akal would come in to check on me and bubba, and then leave Mason and I to be in the surreal space of expectancy and exhaustion.

It was a marathon, an active labour of 28 hours. When I became overwhelmed and almost devoid of any emotion and wanted out (!), Akal and Mason were there to inspire and encourage me and even make me laugh! Akal's calmness gave me strength and an absolute assurance that everything was going just fine. Because we had got to know Akal over the months, it was especially comforting to have her there, not only as a midwife but also as a mother figure.

Koko was born on a beautiful spring morning of September 2006. I felt so strong and empowered to have birthed my baby completely naturally and without any unnecessary interventions. I have Akal to thank for this, as without her reassurances, knowledge, and love, it could have been a very different experience. I can only wish and hope that every woman has the access and support to achieve the birth of their child in this most natural and nurturing way.

We are blessed to know Akal as she played an integral part of giving us such an important rite of passage to begin our journey of being a family.





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Mother of All Rallies

VICTORIA KLEEBERG

The 'Mother of all Rallies', as it came

to be known was held on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra last month.

It was a rally about choice and for women's rights, the right to choose how, where and with whom women birth. The banners and t-shirts said it all... 'our bodies, our choice', 'made at home, born at home', 'homebirth is a choice not a crime' and more. One group of women, dressed up as turn of the century suffragettes, held their banners confirming that over 100 years ago women won the right to vote, now more than 100 years on we need to protest for the right to choose where we birth.

Thousands of people from around the country came together on the hill in the rain to protest against the exclusion of homebirth in the proposed changes to maternity services. Qantas unknowingly even overbooked the carrying capacity of babies on their flights into the Capital and the commitment shown by one mother, driving from Townsville with four small children, encapsulates the commitment of all.

Women rallied in response to the Rudd/Roxon health agenda with its Orwellian proposals to outlaw homebirth and prosecute attending midwives. These measures are against women's rights, in contravention of numerous international covenants and are contrary to established best practice in all our trading partner countries except one. Most women around the world birth at home, the USA and Australia being the exception



rather than the rule. Many countries such as UK, Canada, NZ and the Netherlands enjoy fully funded homebirth programs and subsequently have far higher homebirth rates. Studies have consistently shown as well as the World Health Organisation (WHO), that homebirth is many times safer than hospital births due to the very high rates of intervention within the hospital system. These lead to higher rates of surgical birth, which is not a preferable birthing process for most women.

So with the UK recommending an expansion to their homebirth program, and our hospital system vastly overstretched, why is it that the Australian government in its misguided wisdom is trying to legislate that homebirth will be no longer? A key message from the rally was that "We are not going to go away!"

The rally, estimated to number around 3500 was addressed by many speakers. They included the Shadow Minister for Health Peter Dutton, who noted that there was no Federal government ministers present and went on to say, "In this country, in this century, this is a basic human right". Ian McFarlane, member for Groom commented, "If they've got the money to put pink bats in houses, they've got the money for you to have babies in those houses". That raised a laugh. On a more serious note he pointed out that homebirth is not a choice for politicians, it is the woman's choice. Similarly Shadow Minister for the Status of Women, Sophie Mirabella exhorted the government to respect women's choices. And from Greens Senator Rachel Siewert, "indemnity insurance must be extended to all midwives for all births" and "homebirth should be a choice for every mother in this country".

Senator Steve Fielding asked, "Why would the government want to outlaw homebirth, it should be helping women not hindering them". Notably, he recently attended a rally outside Nicola Roxon's office in Melbourne where 400 women gathered on short notice. It was interesting to hear too that in Victoria



homebirth has doubled over the past ten years.

Perhaps most memorable was Dr Andrew Laming, Member for Bowman, a GP/Obstetrician in his words “trained in the art of intervention, of gadgets and paraphernalia, of monitors and clips”. He generously acknowledged the midwives who have stepped outside the system and demanded continuity of care and choice for women.

Speakers acknowledged that the unexpected show of strength against the exclusion of homebirth, well coordinated in a short space of time, had shocked minister Roxon and health bureaucrats and forced an unexpected backflip, a stay of execution on the indemnity requirement for two years.

Announced just two days before the rally on Friday afternoon, it was presumably designed to ‘take the heat out of the rally’, but on that wet Monday morning there was plenty of steam!

For a full video of the rally go to www.onetruemedia.com/otm

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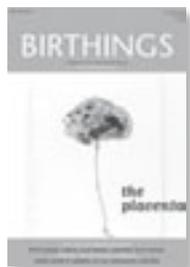


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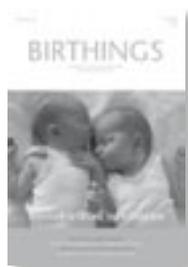
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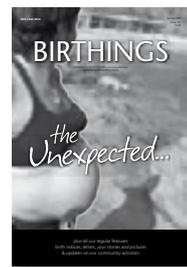
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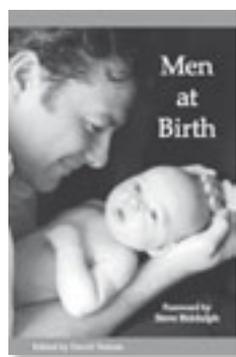


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Ode To My Midwife

VIRGINIA MADDOCK

I first met Jacqui (Wood) about 3 years ago when HAS was doing natural birth information nights in Bondi Junction. At the time I was training to be a doula and went along to the meetings to learn more about birth, network and meet expectant couples who might need a doula.

I immediately felt comfortable with her as she was friendly and knowledgeable, as well as being a kiwi like my partner Dan. I knew then that one day when I was ready to get pregnant, she might be the one to walk the baby journey with us.

I found out I was pregnant by taking an early detection pregnancy test one Sunday, the day before my period was due, on our second month of trying to conceive. The very next day I called up Jacqui with the news and asked her to be my midwife - I was so excited to finally have the opportunity to ask her, and I wanted to get in early to ensure she didn't get booked out.

On our first prenatal visit, she made Dan feel reassured that this homebirth business wasn't reckless tomfoolery and I was relieved they got along so well. It was important to me that he was comfortable with whomever I chose. I felt that there was a good kiwi connection for him as he has no family in Australia. The beauty of homebirth is that there is no need to step foot in a hospital before, during or after the birth if there is no medical reason to. So I looked forward to each prenatal visit in a relaxed atmosphere in my lounge room, done over a cold drink or cup of tea, with each visit averaging around two hours. When she felt my belly for the baby, I was lying down on my own couch, not

some hard sterile bed in a hospital clinic.

There were a couple of things that happened during my pregnancy, which would likely have caused out of proportion concern if I were to birth in a hospital. The first thing was that I was found to be group B strep positive at 19 weeks, which my GP insisted on swabbing me for, when I only went in to get my iron tested and my blood results came back as having a high white cell count - this usually means a sign of infection in the non-pregnant but

Jacqui told me later it was perfectly normal in pregnancy (which my GP obviously didn't know!). If only I had checked with her first as I wouldn't have even got the test. Jacqui assured me that it is a transient bacteria that up to 30% of women carry at any time and many countries do not even routinely test for it, which means that many women would give birth without even knowing that they are carriers. My doctor wanted to give me antibiotics but I flatly refused, knowing that if it were going to be a problem then it wasn't an issue till I birthed around 21 weeks later. Jacqui gave me some research on GBS and told me the risk factors that increased the likelihood of problems for my baby, so my mind was put at ease. Apart from using garlic later in the pregnancy (just to be on the safe side), I didn't worry about it and decided not to get tested again - I would deal with it if and when the risk factors presented themselves.

I also developed quite swollen ankles and feet in late pregnancy (in the blistering heat of summer) along with a slight trace of protein in my urine and slightly high blood pressure, which could have progressed to pre-eclampsia. Again Jacqui remained calm and reassuring, but kept a close check that it did not progress to something more serious by calling in to check on me sooner than my next scheduled appointment. (Fortunately it didn't get worse.) Such lovely and caring attention!

I was so glad that I didn't consider going through my local hospital-based homebirth programme, as I didn't want to risk being kicked off the programme and forced to birth in hospital at any hint of deviating from normal, which definitely would've happened in my circumstances. It was so worth the extra money to have my own private independent midwife!

At the end of my pregnancy, my baby was consistently positioned lateral to posterior, and completely unengaged. At my 41 week check she told me that she would have to have the conversation with me about induction when I hit 42 weeks, but that I was under no obligations if baby was still happy.

Fortunately I went into labour at 41 weeks and 5 days and my baby was born 13 days "overdue". If I had not been having a homebirth, I would've been coerced by an obstetrician into having an induction around about the standard 10 days over. Possibly less as he was what we would call a healthy size, but which an obstetrician would probably have said was too big (he was almost 4kg and I am not a big framed woman by any means).

When Jacqui came over during my labour she told me that she had been getting a little worried that he had been overdue and not engaging, but I never would have known that from her calm manner. During the 7 hours of my labour that Jacqui was with me, she and I had interesting conversations in between my contractions while I was in the pool. She was a welcome relief for Dan when he



Workshops with
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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.

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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.



2010 workshops

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop

February 20, 21 Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm
Concord, Sydney, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$350

Moonsong

March 13, 14 Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm
Cottage Point, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential,
\$400 or \$300 per person for two family members

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop

April 7, 8, 9 Wed - Fri, 930 – 5pm
Melbourne, Vic.
Fully catered, non-residential \$550
Accommodation (D,B,B) onsite available

Moonsong

April 10, 11 Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm
Melbourne, Vic
Non-residential, participants bringing lunch to share, morning and afternoon teas provided \$400 or \$300 per person for two family members
Accommodation (D,B,B) onsite available

Moonsong

April 24, 25 Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm
Julatten Retreat. Port Douglas, Qld
\$475, Includes one night's accommodation, all meals and one treatment

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop

April 27, 28, 29 Tues – Thurs, 930 – 5pm
Julatten Retreat. Port Douglas, Qld
\$700, Includes two nights accommodation all meals and one treatment

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop

May 5, 6, 7 Wed – Fri, 930 – 5pm
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Moonsong

May 8, 9 Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$350 or \$250 per person for two family members

Maiden's and Mothers Moonsong

July 19, Mon Evening
Hobart, Tasmania

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop

July 21, 22, 23 Wed – Fri, 930 – 5pm
Hobart, Tasmania
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Moonsong

July 24, 25 Saturday, Sunday 930 – 5pm
Hobart, Tasmania
Fully catered, non-residential \$350 or \$250 per person for two family members

School of Shamanic Midwifery

Program 2, Opening Gathering
October 16, 17, Saturday and Sunday
Port Macquarie, NSW

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop

November 17, 18, 19, Wed – Fri, 930 – 5pm
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$450

Moonsong

November 20, 21, Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm
Southern Highlands, NSW
Fully catered, non-residential \$350 or \$250 per person for two family members

Pregnancy – The Inner Journey Workshop

November 24, 25, 26, Wed – Fri, 930 – 5pm
Melbourne, Vic
Fully catered, non-residential \$550
Accommodation (D,B,B) onsite probably available

Moonsong

November 27, 28, Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm
Melbourne, Vic
Non-residential, participants bringing lunch to share, morning and afternoon teas provided \$400 or \$300 per person for two family members
Accommodation (D,B,B) onsite probably available

The School of Shamanic Midwifery

- for midwives, doulas and birthkeepers.
Program 2 Northern NSW and Queensland Oct 2010 - Dec 2011
Program 3 Tasmania Feb - Dec 2011
<http://schoolofshamanicmidwifery.blogspot.com/>

needed a break from supporting me to escape the sweltering heat. Little did I know at the time that occasionally she took a break to check the computer for updates on the Black Saturday bushfires.

My labour was smooth and fairly uneventful up until I had to push my baby out. My second stage took three hours. There were many times I felt too exhausted to go on and at one stage I begged for her to just cut me to get him out quicker, but she reassured me that there was no emergency reason to do so as he was not distressed. Instead she massaged my perineum to help it to stretch around his head, as I had a tight band of muscle on one side which would not stretch. His head crowned for about 45 minutes. In hospital I have no doubt that I would've been given an unnecessary episiotomy. If I were in the hospital homebirth programme, I would have had a very distressing and traumatising transfer to hospital during second stage because it was taking too long for their rules of how long things should take. My third stage was also quite long at two and three quarter hours, but again Jacqui trusted the process. No syntocinon injection required!

Another thing I didn't have to worry about was being pressured into giving my baby needles. No pressure to have the heel prick test, no pressure to have vitamin K, no pressure to have vaccinations or have him taken away to be put under a UV lamp for being jaundiced. Not to say that she wouldn't have strongly advised to get any of these things if she felt that my baby needed them, and I had enough trust in her judgement and knowledge that I would've done anything that she advised!

When he was 2 weeks old and my partner had his first day back at work, leaving me at home alone with my baby for the first time, I felt overwhelmed when he cried every time I put him down to get something done like have a shower or go to the toilet. I called Jacqui and broke down in tears exclaiming "I think I've created a monster!" because he had always been held by one of us. Again Jacqui was my voice of reason and made me feel so much better that I was not giving him permanent psychological damage by not holding him every single minute of the day.

Since having Jacqui as my midwife I consider her more of a friend and there have been times that I have called her up to get some inside clarification about the current political situation surrounding homebirth. Recently I was privileged to work alongside her where I was the doula at another homebirth. It gave me a new perspective and cemented in my mind what a great midwife she is.

When I arrived she was giving the client shiatsu on her lower back until I took over to allow her to write her notes. She was so reassuring when the woman was feeling fragile during transition and it was a nice reminder of how she was during my own transition. I loved helping her by holding the mirror while she used the torch to check the baby as it crowned under the water in the birth pool. Before I left we gave the family some private time and the two of us sat outside and chatted in the early hours of dawn.

Jacqui is just about to move west to the Blue Mountains which saddens me that she is not as close by, as I would love to have the opportunity to work alongside her again, but especially because I really want her to be my midwife again for my next baby. But I wish her all the very best and hope that she enjoys success in the next chapter of her life. Sydney's loss is the Mountain's gain!



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Indigo's Birth Story

SUZEE BRAIN

My name is Suzee. I am 44 years old.

At 2.43am on Friday 4th September 2009, I achieved what Nicola Roxon and The Rudd Government want to deny many other women like me – an ecstatic and safe homebirth of my third beautiful daughter, Indigo.

Following the expert and holistic antenatal care I received from my private midwife, Jane Collings (3 times more face to face time than I had received through the hospital system for my previous births), I delivered Indigo. She was born into my own hands, in a peaceful waterbirth watched over by my husband and our other daughters (Ally, 7 years and Zoe, 6 years). Our midwife was able to 'witness' the birth and take these amazing photos!

After Indigo's birth, we all gathered around the fire in our country home and enjoyed chocolate cake and Champagne. Ally and Zoe started to knit Indigo a scarf and beanie of their own volition (it was 5am by this stage!). We all

retired to our king size bed and mattresses on the floor for the girls and snuggled into fresh flannelette sheets around 6am with Zoe stating she wanted to wake up soon to check that Indi's arrival had not been a dream!

The whole family felt deeply bonded and the love surrounding us all was sublime. This experience is not possible if birth choices are restricted to hospitals and birth centres only. I trust that the bean counters will soon prove that supplementing insurance for private midwives and keeping normal births out of the medical system reduces health care costs and provides women with actual birth CHOICES!

Indigo's birth was a very empowering and fulfilling end to my birthing cycle. In preparation for Indigo's birth I found myself drawn to numerous experts on birth education. This included two powerful workshops – Jane Collings "Pregnancy the Inner Journey" which saw me claim my absolute belief in my body's innate ability to birth my baby safely and fearlessly. The other course was Peter Jackson's "Calm Birth" which taught me deep relaxation, visualisation and educated me on the birth stages.

In addition, I had decided there was a possible link between breathing techniques and pain management and so undertook a Butekyo breathing course with Victoria Kleeberg.

Lastly, I spent my evening reading quality birth books like Sarah Buckley's "Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering" along with watching some fantastic birthing DVD's like "Birth as we know it" and "Orgasmic Birth" which gave me fantastic visual images of women ecstatically delivering

their children in all sorts of circumstances.

Labour took some time to begin with some partial shows for a few days and the odd contraction. Finally on the Thursday the contractions started to feel stronger and I knew Indigo would come soon. I spent the morning running a few errands and when shopkeepers would ask me when I was due I would reply with a huge smile 'today'. They were all amazed at how calm and well I appeared.

We had an early dinner and put the children to bed. The support team for our children arrived around 9pm and we sat playing Pontoon (I lost every hand so lucky we were only betting with match sticks) and laughing. It was very relaxing and joyous. Around 10.30pm Lyn and Anita headed to bed and Gavin began to prepare the birth space while I rested. At this stage I could breath easily through each contraction. By 11.30pm the contractions were strong and required me to move around. They were close together but inconsistent. I rang Jane and we both agreed labour was not yet established. Jane suggested I go somewhere quiet on my own and concentrate on the labour. It didn't take much concentration to establish labour. I rang Jane again at 1am with contractions now 5 minutes apart and she prepared to join us.

I was finding the contractions quite demanding so entered the birth pool and enjoyed the relief of the water. As each contraction came I visualised myself holding Indigo's hand and we would face the contraction as a 'wave' that we would dive under together and bless and thank the wave for bringing us closer to meeting each other.

Labour progressed very quickly and steadily and when Jane arrived by 2am, I was in deeply focussed concentration to get through each contraction. By now I was nearing transition and the contractions grew extremely intense. Despite loving coaching from the sidelines by Gavin, I threw all my breathing and visualisation techniques out the window. As transition peaked, with two 'highs' per contraction I felt the sensations of vomiting and of wanting to give in. This got me excited, as I knew that meant I was getting close to fully dilating. I still had some resistance to the pain and at one stage let out the 'f' word as the contraction peaked. In the background I heard my wise and learned midwife simply respond in a low quiet voice "OOOOOPEN". These words triggered me into returning to a space of surrender rather than resistance and within minutes I felt the last of my cervix open and the contractions begin to grow farther apart and less intense – joy of joys I knew I was now



on the downhill run and had been through the strongest part.

The final challenge was the pushing. As the first urge came and I felt Indigo descending into the birth canal I tensed up afraid of the pain of the stretching of my perineum so I didn't work with the first push. Then I suddenly re-connected with the fact the pushes meant I was about to meet my baby so without hesitation I pushed out her head on the next push and announced to Gavin and Jane to their surprise that her head was here.

While I waited for the next surge, Jane raced to wake the children and bring them to the birth pool. I had Indigo's head in my hands and enjoyed the most amazing sensation as her head rotated in my hands as she positioned her shoulders ready to be free on the next push. With that I gently pushed her into my own hands and raised her to my chest!

Although I had the same intense labour with all three births of my daughters, I have

learnt two empowering lessons in my birthing journey;

1. Give in to the pain rather than "give up". In my first birth I "gave up" to the pain very early and called for an epidural. My education on the birth process since then has meant I learnt to 'surrender' rather than 'fight' the sensations. This allowed me to experience the amazing and innate wisdom of my body and baby to birth.

2. Stay present. In Zoe's birth (no. 2), I birthed her in the water but ran away from the sensations mentally as opposed to being present and connected as I was with Indigo. This resulted in such a positive birth experience that will stay with me forever.

PS. Around 10 hours later some innate 'mother's intuition' followed by responsible observations by our midwife, led to a decision to take Indigo to hospital where she required some medical assistance to overcome a transient breathing difficulty not associated

with her birth. This combination clearly demonstrated the case for choice, whereby we enjoyed a perfectly safe homebirth experience with powerful positive effects and limited cost to the health system, and then when medical attention was required, it was available and appreciated.



Julia Angeline's Birth Story

AMELIA ALLAN

I look down at my five day old daughter in her sling. "Where shall we start?"

Our 'due' date came and went, just as with my other two pregnancies. So I took the time to nourish myself: some acupuncture and a couple of day trips. But I was often preoccupied with concerns about how having a rectocele (weakened back wall of the vagina) would affect the birth. I worried whether my body would be able to give birth in tact. I had been reassured by my midwife that it wouldn't be a problem, but some physical sensations got me worrying that there might be other weaknesses.

A week passed. I decided that since the baby had to come out anyway, I would do what I could to move out of the fear. So I booked a clearing/healing session that changed my outlook totally. I connected with wonderful supporting energies, cleared out old self-beliefs and nourished my heart-space. I remember the therapist saying, "You just need to park your mind somewhere, like in a chant."

I had tried some home remedies for natural induction. Now I took a homeopathic remedy and went for a lovely long walk with my husband and sons by the foreshore. The local restaurant had a large open balcony looking over the harbour and my being spread out wide into the evening.

The next morning I started feeling mild irregular contractions. I went for a walk and stopped to talk to a neighbour, telling her when another one was happening.

I told our midwife Jan and checked with my support people (at about 12:30pm). I established myself on a Swiss ball in the open living space with a hot water bottle on my abdomen and the Gowri Motha labour preparation CD on cover-all headphones. Through the headphones I heard a tinkling Greensleaves; the home ice-cream truck. I asked Mum to get a little ice-cream cake for after the birth, as it was the same day of the

fortnight as Gabriel's birthday, when we also bought a cake.

Raphael (our oldest son) was listening to James and the giant peach, which I also vaguely heard through my headphones. It strikes me now that I was the giant peach, with somebody moving about inside me just as James was in the peach.

I switched to my Holosync meditation music, which was wonderful. In the background I heard Raf and Gabe making their labour-project gingerbread biscuits with Grandma. Julius started filling the birth pool.

Weeks ago I had explained to Raf that he and Gabe would get to spend the day with Grandma while the new baby was being born, as Daddy would be busy helping Mummy push the new baby out. He said, "I want to help Daddy help Mummy push the new baby out." I was very touched to hear that. But I was also apprehensive in case this birth was posterior like the other two, especially if I had a certain shaped pelvis. A friend suggested I have a carer for each of the boys to avoid my trying to take care of them during labour. So my mum took them to my good friend Katie's house, so that if Raf wanted to come back at some stage he could. But as he was leaving he said: "Mum can we stay over at Gaga's [grandma]? I don't mind if I don't see the new baby till tomorrow morning". I was surprised, as they had never been away overnight. But it felt right. So they took the warm gingerbread biscuits, and I told them I loved them and looked forward to seeing them in the morning. Then I put on a beautiful devotional chant and sent messages to friends that it was starting. I got a wealth of strength from their return messages. Julius lit all the candles in the birthing room and friends lit theirs and sent support. It was 3pm.

My midwife Jan and support partner Melanie arrived just before 5pm. For hours it seemed I had been rocking on the Swiss ball, but seeing them I suddenly felt light and free and got up to embrace them. Julius started filling the pool the rest of the way. I had been resting into Julius during contractions at times, but now I held onto Melanie or Jan, as though we were creating a united energy to empower me for the birthing process. I wanted to walk around the back garden (this time I wanted to do everything that would support effective contractions. I wanted to make use of every bit of time).

Another contraction started and I reached for Melanie. I walked back and went onto all fours in the grass. Jan brought a towel for us and she sat with us. Our cat came and lay down with us. Melanie rubbed my back

for a contraction and then we sat back to back. By now I was chanting "mmm" and pressing onto my lower abdomen during contractions. After a while I got up to stretch my legs, and met Jules who was changing the hose temperature. We held each other for a contraction, and I felt his love and deep, steady strength flowing into me.

The pool was filled and Jules wanted me to try it. It was a great relief, but too deliciously warm. Nearer room temperature I stepped in. Outside the open doors of the birthing room, which opened onto the back veranda and garden, it was that brilliant light of pre-twilight, tinting the darkening trees bright gold. It left a kind of soul impression in me, like I was right there in it. Somebody mentioned what a great setting it was for birthing and I remember being grateful that I was at home.

Now Julius got in too. I was leaning over the edge of the pool, holding onto Melanie or Jan during contractions. They were pretty strong now and my chants were open mouthed sounds for more power to match the intensity that was being brought to bear in me. At some point I started feeling the pain in my lower back. It was the same as the previous posterior birth pains; burning, and as if pushing my bones way out hard against my skin. I had to have Julius press back against it into my back and I gripped Melanie hard. Jan suggested I feel for the baby's head. I FELT IT, right at the tip of my stretched middle finger. "My baby's coming!!"

After a few contractions I felt for my baby's head again and s/he still felt the same distance away. I was forlorn. "My baby's not coming!". (I gave myself permission to be uninhibited about expressing self-judged-negative emotions this time, I wanted to hold nothing inside.) Jan explained the process, that there was lots of moulding that had to take place at various stages. She suggested I lie on my side against Julius in the water, in case there was a lip of skin in the baby's way. Melanie put her hands in and I pushed my feet against them. Mmm, much better.

The fan was on and the double doors open, but I needed more air, so I sat forward over the edge of the pool by the open doors. Melanie used my home-made lemon essential oil spray on my face. She and Jan had also been using cold wet towels on my forehead and I loved the small fruit juice ice blocks I had made.

I heard myself say internally: "I can't do it" so I voiced it, and then I knew that that often comes right before the end. Then all of a sudden I felt a big 'POP' gush out from between my legs, like a huge thick water

balloon bursting. I told Jan my waters had broken, and she said: "Well, things will move along faster now".

At some stage my sounds had gotten more yell-like. Jan suggested that I put my force into bearing down instead, which I found was more satisfying. The baby was moving down now. I lent further forward, and then crack!, it felt like two halves of a peach being cracked open by a bowling ball-sized peach pip popping out. Then the feeling of something being half in/half out. I was so excited but I thought "I can't take another earthquake!" and yet it was different: a squishing, wriggling pressure rolling out of me.

"Oh my God!.. I'm turning around!... Can I turn yet?!... I want to hold my baby!!" Although she was born through the water my rapid turning round (as she was behind me) meant that she was brought up, then under again for a moment to avoid my leg. I was totally filled and overflowing with wonder, elation, love, and desire to hold my baby so close. "It was you all along!" I said to her (still not knowing the sex then). She was calm and quiet, she looked around with large dark eyes and simply drank us and everything in. I held her and adored her. I looked at everyone there, my beloved husband, my treasured friend Melanie, my wonderful midwife Jan – I said "I love you all!"

Melanie said "Can we see if it's a boy or girl?", but I wasn't ready. I was drinking her in, her face, her shape, smell, feel. After a few

minutes I checked: "She's a girl!!!!... I think. ... Isn't she? Yes, I know she is!... You made yourself into a girl – how did you do it?" I marvelled into the wonder of her being her. Jan asked if any names had come to me, and I replied "Angelina", which surprised me as I had never considered it before.

A few minutes later she had a little feed in the pool. Julius clamped her cord after it had stopped pulsing. We put a hat on her and covered her. Julius called my mum with the boys.

After ten or so minutes in the pool the placenta wasn't moving out. I was reluctant to get out of the pool and lose the pain-relief of the water, but I remember Raf's placenta had taken four hours to come out, so I got out and sat on the couch as I was itching to hold my baby. She fed again, so I passed her over to stand and see if the placenta would move. Nothing. After a while it just felt so uncomfortable being in there, it was making me feel nauseous. (Jan said it presses on sacral nerves, so it can feel uncomfortable).

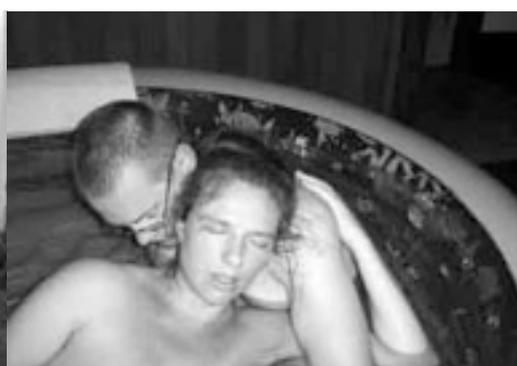
We weighed and dressed her, and eventually I went to the shower to work the placenta out. For some reason I was despairing that it would never get out. I sat on the plastic stool, and a big wee came out which might have been holding things up. On Jan's suggestion I marched for several minutes, and talked to it: "Go out now placenta. I'm ready to release you". And it did! (It was 9:45pm, our baby was born at 7:28pm.) In that instant I felt

relief and completion. The birth was done. I could hold my baby again.

Melanie had just left, but my dear friend Katie arrived just then and helped Jan with cleaning the placenta, washing dishes and made me honey toast and tea.

By 10:30 we were all talked out, and Katie and Jan left. It was just Julius, me and our baby; and enough wonder, delight and contentment to fill our house and hearts.

I have written this in several stages, all the while my baby girl slept on me, part of this writing. Tomorrow she will be one week old; the forgotten ice cream cake has been waiting til then.



Sophia's Birth

GRETA WERNER

It was a perfect sunny winter morning crisp and cold. We had nothing much planned on this Sunday.

I had felt gentle contractions all the way through this, my third, pregnancy. In the previous weeks I felt the contractions getting stronger. It was a very slow build-up. I still had a cold, a blocked nose and wasn't feeling 100%, but I felt confident about getting through the birth process.

At 8am we were sitting around the kitchen table and I started asking myself if this was labour. I said to Paul, my partner that this could be the day our new baby arrives, but I wasn't sure. We had a leisurely breakfast until Kurtis, age 4, woke up. Ruby, 10, was having a sleepover at a friend's house. At 10am I called Jan, our midwife, to say I may be in labour, but not to come over yet. We also called Zoe, who was going to help us at the birth. Zoe had Becky at her place to look after her kids, so she could be with us.

Our friend Suze had sent a special oil blend for labour, which contained Clary Sage. I put some in the oil burner and lit it. The smell was

lovely and the next contraction was stronger. I felt this was it and our baby would be born today.

Paul began running around, getting things ready whilst also looking after Kurtis.

At 11am Jan called to say she would be over soon.

Ruby needed to be picked up from her friend's place and Zoe's car was broken, so Paul called Rick, who offered to help. Our birth team was on its way.

I went into the garden. I hung up some clothes. The next contraction was quite strong. I held on to the hills hoist to take the weight off my legs. I was relaxing the lower part of my body and imagining myself opening up. An even stronger contraction followed. The strength of it was a shock to me. My second labour had been so much easier than the first, which made me believe that the third one would be a piece of cake. It sunk into my brain that this would not be a walk in the park after all. Well, I thought, they don't call it labour for nothing. I felt equal parts disappointment and determination.

Paul had set up the birth pool in the lounge room and blown up the exercise ball. I had laboured while sitting on this ball for Kurtis' birth and it made it less painful. Again, I found the contractions easier while sitting on the ball. I held on to the edge of the birth pool.

Zoe and Ruby then arrived back. I didn't move. I wasn't up for Rick coming in so Paul sent him away which he understood. My eyes were closed. I said a weak hello. Zoe put her

hands on my shoulders and I wept. I was feeling a bit overwhelmed with how hard it was going to be. After a while I felt fine again, ready to get on with it.

Within a short time Jan arrived. The birth team was here and I was ready to go ahead. Everyone else was ready. Ruby put some bobby pins in my hair to keep it out of my face...

The waves kept coming but they were milder. After some time I expressed concern they were a lot milder and easier to handle and may not be doing anything. Should I be walking around? Should I be doing something else?

Jan realised what had happened before the rest of us did. The extra people arriving had slowed the labour down. I wanted them with me and I felt relaxed, but things were not progressing. I didn't need an internal examination to know this.

Jan took the kids to the park and Zoe went into the kitchen. Then Paul went to do something else as well and I was by myself. It felt good. I put on my birth affirmation CD. I felt like getting into the birth pool even though the contractions were still mild. The water felt nice and warm and I realised that I had been cold. I listened. "The birthing energy is a natural force. Surrender to this force" It struck me that I had been trying to perform the birth. This was my third time and I should be expert at it now. I should know how to do it. Ha ha. I happily relieved myself of this responsibility. If it's slow, then it's slow. Not my fault. It will be how it will be.

Jan came in and saw me in the pool.



She left again and the next contraction was stronger. Zoe and Paul poured hot water into the pool. Now it was even better. Whoaa. This was a proper contraction. I held on to the edge of the pool. Bring it on! I welcomed the strength of it. It was difficult, but this was the only way forward. This was going to bring the baby out.

I did not try to quietly breathe through the contractions as I had imagined myself doing. Instead I was doing short moans at the height of the wave and longer ones toward the end. Paul was leaning over the edge of the pool, massaging my back. I was grasping his leg and squeezing with all my might. Jan monitored the baby's heart rate every now and then. The kids gave me sips of water through a straw.

My sounds changed, coming from deeper in my throat. I imagined this was transition and was happy. The first stage was over.

I turned around in the pool, facing up now. I wanted to catch the baby as it came out. With the next contraction I held onto Paul's chest as he leaned over the edge of the pool. I felt the baby moving through me. In between contractions I checked to see if I could touch it's head. Its head was there. I felt a strong pressure on my anus. I was concerned that my perineum would tear. Jan held my perineum just in case the head came out quickly. I did not push. I felt the stinging sensation as I opened up. I felt several more contractions.

Then a more gentle one pushed the head out. I felt the head with my hands, but was also afraid to touch it. Hurray, the head was out. The rest would be easy. Another contraction came,

and the body slipped out.

Jan caught the baby and lifted it to my chest. Hurray, Hurray! I was holding a completely new person. Jan said not to worry, because the baby would not breathe until the amniotic sack was off its head. Then it struck me that the baby was covered in a membrane. We all pulled at the membrane, trying to break it, but it was strong. We managed to pull it off the baby's head, and the baby gave a cry and moved it's tiny limbs. We were all talking to the baby. Zoe and Ruby were taking photos. Ruby and Kurtis had seen the birth and were celebrating with us. Zoe checked the time and it was 5:10 pm.

Jan asked if it was a boy or a girl. I had not thought to look. I lifted the baby to look, and saw that she was a girl. I was flooded with a warm sense of joy. My intuition had been correct.

Jan sucked some mucous from her throat and then got ready to cut the cord, as it had stopped pulsating. Paul cut the cord with some trepidation. He was somehow worried about hurting the baby.

Then it was his turn to hold her. She was weighed (3500g) and dressed in the nappy and clothes that Ruby and I had chosen for her two weeks ago.

The placenta was still inside. Jan asked me to see if it would come out. I stood up and pulled on the cord. I could faintly feel it pulling on my insides, but it would not move. I got out of the pool and was wrapped in a warm fluffy dressing gown. The heater was on.

Everyone was talking to the baby again. As each person spoke, she looked in their direction. Her eyes were dark, mysterious pools, turning to receive the information. On the other side of those eyes must be the purest form of fresh experience.

Our couch is a double futon. I lay down and nursed our baby daughter lying on my side. She managed to get the nipple and started sucking. I thought how miraculous this instinctual ability was.

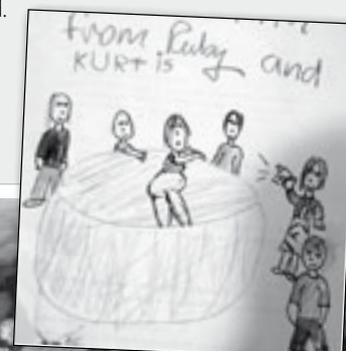
I called my mum on her mobile. She was in Zurich, walking down the road in the morning sunshine.

The placenta was still inside. Feeding the baby was causing stronger contractions. Jan hoped that the contractions would have dislodged the placenta. She pulled on the cord, and it stung a bit as the placenta slipped out.

That was it. The birth was complete and it was around 7 pm. I felt satisfied and happy that it was all done.

Jan gave Zoe a lift home and Paul and Kurtis drained the birth pool and packed it away. My mum called back.

Then we called Paul's parents in Scotland. The baby happened to be crying, so we just held the phone to her. Paul's mum was on the line. She was overjoyed, knowing straight away that it was her newest grandchild. 'It's a baby, it's a baby' she cried.





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For more information on the products, services, workshops and courses offered by and through the Sydney Pregnancy Centre please email info@sydneypregnancycentre.com or visit www.sydneypregnancycentre.com

Media Watch

Home birth has continued to be a hot topic in the media in the past months . . .

4 September

Sydney Morning Herald & ABC Online

Govt backs down on Homebirth. The federal government has backed down on controversial legislation that would have seen home birthing effectively made illegal. The move came as thousands of women prepared to gather at Parliament House on Monday to demand government funding and insurance for home birthing. State and territory health Ministers agreed to a two-year exemption from holding indemnity insurance for midwives attending homebirths.

8 September

Sydney Morning Herald and The Age amongst others reported on the 'Mother of all rallies' for home birth

The "mother of all rallies" drew 2000 home-birth supporters to Parliament from all over Australia who braved drenching rain, chanted "home-birth rocks" and declared they would "haunt" the Health Minister Nicola Roxon over the official refusal to insure home births. Liberal MP and Obstetrician Andrew Laming, said the call by state and federal health ministers for more safety data on home births before giving medical indemnity was ridiculous given home birth's relative safety and the likely low cost of any subsidies. He also said several big international studies had made it clear that home births were as safe as hospital births in low-risk cases, which represented 90-95% of births.

9 November 2009

abc.net.au and smh.com.au

Both reported on the birth advocacy groups who rallied at sites across the country, including the Brisbane headquarters of the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd and in Sydney outside the Surry Hills office of the Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek. The protest was against the amendment made public last week, which reveals that to work in private practice midwives will first have to "enter a collaborative arrangement . . . with one or more medical practitioners". Many waved placards, pushed prams or carried babies in their arms. Speakers told the rally that women should have the right to decide how they give birth. Protesters say they will continue fighting the amendment into next year.



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Jennifer Barham – Floreani, Carolyn Hastie

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details on the website



Personal is Political

ALISON LEEEMEN



The Federal Government has continued to ride roughshod over the rights of Australian women and their families to choose homebirth, despite our committed campaigning.

Two Year 'Exemption'

On 4 September 2007, Health Minister Nicola Roxon announced a two year exemption for homebirth midwives from the registration requirement that all midwives hold professional indemnity insurance. The COAG Joint Communique, released the Friday afternoon before Monday morning's rally outside Parliament House, stated that the exemption was subject to additional requirements:

- A requirement to provide full disclosure and informed consent that they do not have professional indemnity insurance.
- Reporting each homebirth
- Participating in a quality and safety framework which will be developed after consultation led by Victoria through the finalisation of the registration and accreditation process.
- These provisions will only apply to midwives working in jurisdictions which do not prohibit such practice as at the date of the implementation of the scheme.

The 'exemption solution' is a non-solution. It keeps homebirth midwives and consumers out in the cold in terms of equitable insurance arrangements, it puts the problem beyond the next election, and it placed vague conditions on the availability of the exemption that are entirely undetailed.

Convincing politicians of that fact is much more

difficult. Those who had steadfastly stated that they stood for women's choice and would vote against legislation that criminalised professionally attended homebirth suddenly were prepared to accept these onerous preconditions to homebirth, and the continued unfairness of homebirths being the only uninsured and unfunded births in Australia.

The Mother of All Rallies

On 7 September, many of you gathered together outside Parliament House in Canberra to protest the lack of choice and equity in maternity services. Many had travelled long distances to be there. Rain drizzled throughout the rally, making it a more difficult experience for those of us with young kids along. Unfortunately, it probably also adversely affected our media coverage, as instead of gorgeous kids frolicking on the lawn and parents spreading out on picnic blankets, the pictures were of people huddled close under umbrellas and raincoats. Nevertheless, the rally had an impact on the speeches the parliamentarians were making inside the House.

We are, as ever, so thoroughly impressed by the commitment of those who know homebirth to travel large distances, take days off work and kids out of school, make banners and t-shirts and generally do all they can to stand up for women's rights. Well done, everyone.

Homebirth Access Sydney representatives met with the Opposition Health Spokesman, Peter Dutton, and Greens Senator Rachel Siewert immediately before the rally. Mr Dutton indicated that the Opposition was still considering its position in response to the 'exemption solution' and that there wasn't much appetite for rejecting the legislation outright, given that 'a solution' to the criminality issue had been presented. Senator Siewert was open to working with us on appropriate amendments and seeking more detail from the Government. The Greens have continued to work productively and actively with HAS and other relevant groups. But the Greens don't have the numbers to block anything in the Senate without the Opposition.

The collaboration hoax

On Thursday 5 November, the Government announced its intention to introduce its own amendments into the Senate regarding collaboration. The gist of the amendments was to require midwives to work with a doctor in order



to access the benefits of the act (insurance, Medicare coverage, prescribing benefits). Although homebirth midwives are excluded from all those benefits anyway, we were still disappointed that (a) even the midwives working independently for women in hospitals would have to have a collaborative arrangement in place with a doctor before they could obtain registration; (b) in the future when homebirth midwives would hopefully be included under this framework and access insurance and Medicare, they would only be able to practice if a doctor gave the all-clear; and (c) a similar requirement will likely be inserted in the 'safety and quality framework' that will apply to homebirth midwives under the 'exemption solution'. Effectively, this means that midwives can't get registered unless a doctor signs off on working with them (whatever that means—once again, there are no details yet).

Hang on, weren't these maternity reforms about increasing midwifery-led care? Has the Government been derailed from its own agenda by the AMA? And who's paying for this anyway?

Suffice it to say, the thing's a dog's breakfast. Our attempts to contact Health Minister Nicola Roxon's office have been met with a wall of silence. What was left but to rally again?

We Want Choices, Hear Our Voices

So on Monday 9 November, with only a weekend's notice, a hundred or so women plus their children gathered outside Minister for Women Tanya Plibersek's Surry Hills office to try to get her attention on the matter. Simultaneous rallies were also held at Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's office in Queensland, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard's office in Victoria and Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith's office in Perth.

You might recall HAS representatives had meetings with Ms Plibersek and her staff back in August 2007 and March 2008 and she had expressed her support (indeed, we have an email from her staffer saying she was keen to act on the issue), but since then she has refused to get involved. She did not even give a speech in parliament regarding the midwifery bills, despite their obvious impact on Australian women and her portfolio responsibilities.

Several speakers at the Surry Hills rally condemned the Government's mishandling of the maternity reforms and the collaborative arrangements in particular. Jo Tilly spoke for Homebirth Access Sydney with two week old Pippi asleep in one arm. Women

chanted "We want choices, hear our voices", drums were banged, and our rally-hardened babes snoozed on in slings.

Unfortunately, the Government was holding one of its Community Cabinet meetings in Bathurst that day, so all of the lobbied Ministers were absent from their electoral offices, but lots of calling cards were left and some local news coverage was achieved, including a Sydney Morning Herald article that day.

The Senate

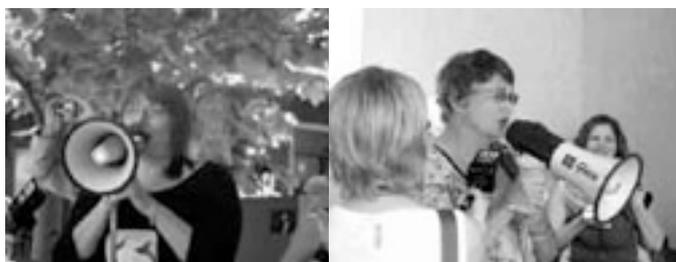
On Monday 23 November, Greens Senator Siewert successfully had the midwife bills referred again to the Senate's Standing Committee on Community Affairs, along with the Government's collaboration amendments, for inquiry and report by 1 February 2010. In this second inquiry, the committee is required to consider:

- whether the consequences of the Government's amendments for professional regulation of midwifery will give doctors medical veto over midwives ability to renew their licence to practice;
- whether the Government's amendments influence on the health care market will be anti-competitive;
- whether the Government's amendments will create difficulties in delivering intended access and choice for Australian women;
- why the Government's amendments require a collaborative arrangement that do not specifically include maternity service providers including hospitals;
- whether the Government's amendments will have a negative impact on safety and continuity of care for Australian mothers; and
- any other matter.

A date has not yet been set for hearings, nor submissions called for.

The quality and safety framework

In the meantime, on rolls the Victorian-led development of a 'quality and safety framework', which midwives are required to 'participate in' in order to access the exemption that will allow them to continue attending births at home. Homebirth Access Sydney has made contact with the public servants drafting the framework and provided a written submission to it. We expect to provide written comments on the draft framework, due to be released in early December, and to be consulted in January/February when the bureaucrats visit the other states to meet with key stakeholders. We'll keep you posted.



HAS in the Community

BIRTH CHOICES EXPO

Supporting you and your baby naturally...

Friday 30 October 2009

Robin Grille entertained and enlightened the crowd at this year's vibrant Birth Choices Expo with his perspective on natural birth and parenting as well as his own personal experience of homebirth. He highlighted the importance of the birth experience for both parents and baby, how recent research debunks previous views that babies don't experience pain and that the first 2 years are not important in terms of babies development. For those of us familiar with his books, it was great to hear what he has to say and discuss with him in person. For those new to his research and writing, it provided a compelling perspective amongst the myriad of other, less gentle views.

Exhibitors included independent midwives, doulas, the RPA and St George Birth Centres, the ABA, natural therapy practitioners and complimentary baby products – all promoting a holistic view of birth and the early years. Plus our new Men At Birth table was a surprising hit! It was wonderful to be surrounded by such intelligence and passion and to spread the message about homebirth in these uncertain times.

A huge thank you goes to our Gold & Silver sponsors: The Sydney Pregnancy Centre and The Australian Doula College; and our Bronze sponsors: itti bitti, Birth With Dignity and Your Naturopath. Plus to our additional generous prize donors: Birth Right, Mamaluna, Australian Association of Yoga in Daily Life, Australian Nappy Network, Conscious

Health, Flippity Skip, Weleda, Elizabeth Isaacs.

Our Expo committee, which includes the Blue Dakini team, has increased the frequency of these events to provide more pregnant women with such valuable access to these resources. So come along in March 2010 to share your passion and the homebirth message!

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SYDNEY PREGNANCY CENTRE

BIRTH CHOICES EXPO 2010

TIME & VENUE: 6-9pm, Friday 5 March 2010, Leichhardt Town Hall

GUEST SPEAKER: ** Peter Jackson, Founder of Calm Birth*
Introduction on creating a calmer birth environment.

** Renee Adair, Australian Doula College
Support at birth

For exhibitor & advertising opportunities, plus if you would like to volunteer to help, please contact events@homebirthsydney.org.au

Secretary's Report

GRETA WERNER

- The government has made amendments to the midwifery bills currently before the senate, requiring midwives to 'collaborate' with individual doctors. This would mean that homebirths would be dependant on a doctor's approval, not a midwife's professional judgement or the consumers choice.
- HAS are still lobbying the Liberals to make amendments to the bills before the senate. The Greens are on our side, but don't have enough votes to make any changes. If you can, please write a quick email to your Liberal senator. There is a template letter outlining our concerns about the bills. Email me at gwerner@circleinteriors.com and I will send you one.
- The Natural Birth Seminars for this year have been up and running for a few months now and doing well. Helena and Tamara have worked really hard to make these evenings a success.
- We are still looking to fill the position of Fundraising Co-ordinator. If anyone would like to put his or her hand up for this position it would be greatly appreciated. Please contact any of the committee members to discuss.
- Our biannual Birth Choices Expo was held on 30th October. Our events team put in a huge effort organising this event, and many people

helped out. The next one is on 5th March next year.

- The AGM is to be held on Friday 26th February 2010. All members of Homebirth Access Sydney are invited to attend to be held at Jo Tilly's house, 50 Victoria Road, Marrickville from 10am onwards. The purpose of the AGM is to confirm minutes of last meeting and elect office bearers for the year ahead and confirm committee and financial reports.

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Naomi offers a unique blend of Japanese and Chinese acupuncture, and Chinese herbal medicine, providing a comprehensive and gentle therapeutic approach. Specialising in Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Naomi has supported many women through conception, pregnancy, birth and post-natal issues in her busy Woollahra practice. Naomi provides home or hospital visits to women in labour, or those who cannot travel.

Naomi: 0413 690 861

61 Queen St, Woollahra

naomiabeshouse@optusnet.com.au

SYDNEY WIDE

Australian Doula College

Please see our listing on this page under Birth Support Services: Doulas.

INNER WEST

Jutta Wohlrab

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The Midwives Yoga is a unique way to keep you engaged with asana and beautiful pranayama breathing practice, happily energised and well connected through your pregnancy, birth and into early motherhood. This is a beautiful way of preparing yourself for pregnancy and birth. The first thing in life when we arrive is to breathe, so let the breath move you through.

Jutta Wohlrab: 0431201877

www.elementsofbirth.com.au

elementsofbirth@hotmail.com

INNER SYDNEY SUBURBS

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:
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joemidwife@hotmail.com
0431 201 877

NORTH

Birthing Spirit - Heather Crawford

Acupuncturist, Doula, calmbirth®

Please see our listing on the next page under 'Birth Support Services: Doulas'
Heather: 9011 6447 0423 171 191
heather@birthingspirit.com.au
www.birthingspirit.com.au
www.theambaatree.com.au

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

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Jane Hardwicke Collings:
48882002 0408035808
janecollings@bigpond.com
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SYDNEY (HAS)

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10.30am weekly on Mondays at Gunammatta Park, Cronulla. Virginia 0415683074 or maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

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www.birthcentral.org.au

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nataliedash@optusnet.com.au

Clarence Valley Birth Support

Laena Jongen-Morter
(02) 6649 4271

Far North Coast NSW

Jillian Delailie (02) 6689 1641

Illawarra Homebirth Support

Karen Sanders (02) 4225 3727

Mid North Coast Homebirth Support Resource & Referral

Berry Engel-Jones
(W) 6652 8111 (H) 6655 0707

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Jane Collings
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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

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I trained in 2003 at Birth Central, completing post natal doula in 2005. References available.

Mob: 0418 445 653
jacquij@people.net.au

Birthing Spirit - Heather Crawford

- Acupuncturist, Doula, calmbirth®
Heather practices from a lovely clinic overlooking Manly Beach and provides specialist acupuncture services for the whole family through pre-conception, pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. She has post-graduate training in obstetrics, gynecology and paediatrics and has worked alongside an acupuncturist and midwife and is now training to become a midwife herself. Home and hospital visits can be arranged for those who can't travel.

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heather@birthingspirit.com.au
www.birthingspirit.com.au

SOUTHERN SUBURBS

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As a homebirth mum, I have the experience and trust in natural birth to

• *Labour of Love, tales from the world of midwives*
Edited by Amanda Tattam & Cate Kennedy, 2005
• *The Magic of Sex*
Dr. Miriam Stoppard, 1991

Magazines/newsletters:

Various back issues of:
• *Communique*, Australian Society of Independent Midwives
• *Nurture*, quarterly journal of natural parenting, Melbourne
• *BirthChoice* NT
• *Down to Birth* QLD
• *Tummy Talk* NZ
• *Midwifery Matters*
• *Birthing Beautifully* WA
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be your ideal birth support, whether you choose to birth at home, in hospital or birth centre.

As a natural therapist, I have the resources to assist you with reiki massage, herbs and flower essences in case the journey of labour becomes difficult.

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.

My birth package includes 2 prenatal visits, birth support incl. herbs/flower essences & reiki massage, follow-up visit to debrief, and your birth story in a beautifully presented book with photos for you to keep.

Natural Pregnancy, Birth and Post-Natal Kits also available which make great gifts for the expectant or new Mum!

Virginia Maddock
Herbalist, Nutritionist & Doula
85440057 0415 683 074
1/97 Elouera Rd Cronulla
www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

EASTERN SUBURBS/ CITY/INNER WEST

Australian Doula College & The Centre For Spiritual Birth & Development

The Australian Doula College is an integrated health care centre providing education, support and continuity of care for women during pregnancy childbirth and beyond. Through our network of qualified and experienced educators, doulas and practitioners, we offer a variety of services, treatments and support. As a training facility, we provide the support of a trainee doula for only \$165; qualified doulas range from \$600-\$1500. We look forward to being of service to you in this amazing time of your life. Please visit the website for our full range of services.

163 Livingstone Road, Marrickville NSW 2049
2 9558 2500 1300 139 507
moreinfo@australiandoulacollege.com.au
www.australiandoulacollege.com.au

Erika Elliott

MotherBirth – birth as nature intended.
Prepare for the birth of your baby with grace & ease with an holistic, enjoyable & informative approach. As you become the guardian and nurturer of new life, my soul's focus is to be there to gently guide, support and help create a calm and loving birth experience.

I am a mother, doula, calmbirth® educator & massage therapist offering all services in the privacy of your home.
Erika Elliott: 0425 2177 88
erika@motherbirth.com.au

HAS Library

HAS is re-establishing its library of books that have been generously donated for our members to borrow.

Borrowing: Please email or call Erika to collect the books from Lilyfield. 0425 217 788 or 9810 3034 or erikaswa@hotmail.com

Returning: You can either deliver or mail the book(s) back to me.

Happy reading! If anyone has any more titles that they are done with and would like to share around, we would love to have them in our library.

Please find the list of current titles below.

Books:

- *The First 12 Months of Motherhood* Susan Hassebrock, 1996
- *100 ways to calm the crying* Pinky McKay, 2002
- *Parenting by Heart* Pinky McKay, 2001
- *Birth Stories* Katrina O'Brien, 2005
- *Face to Face with Childbirth* Julia Sundin, 1989
- *The Waterbirth Handbook* Dr. Roger Lichy & Eileen Herzberg, 1993

- *The NappyBag Book, resource guide for parents* 6th Edition, 2005
- *Better Birth, the definitive guide to childbirth* Lareen Newman & Heather Hancock, 2006
- *The natural way to a better pregnancy* Francesca Naish & Janette Roberts, 1999
- *Magical Beginnings, Enchanted Lives* Deepak Chopra, 2005
- *Your Baby & Child* Penelope Leach, 2003
- *The Choice Guide to Baby Products* Choice Books, 8th Edition, 2003
- *Helping Your Baby to Sleep* Anni Gethen & Beth Macgregor, 2007
- *Your New Baby* Dr Miriam Stoppard, 2002
- *Up The Duff* Kaz Cooke, 1999
- *Yoga for Pregnancy* Amber Land, 2003
- *Special Women, the role of the professional labour assistant* Paulina Perez & Cheryl Snedeker, 2000

BIRTHING SERVICES **MIDWIVES****Birth With Gentle Choices**

Offering continuity of midwifery care during pregnancy, birth and postnatally. Birth is a natural, and empowering experience that is part of a normal life journey rather than a medical event.

Providing support for women and their families and encouragement to believe in herself and her ability to birth instinctively.

Betty Vella 9540 4992
(GyMEA)

bpvella@optushome.com.au

One to One Midwifery Care

If your expectations are of having a natural birth, less intervention, shared decision making and continuity of care with your own midwife in a safe environment then this service is for you! Women can choose to have their babies at home or in a natural birthing centre. A tailor-made pregnancy plan is offered together with medical liaison if required or requested.

Jan Robinson 0418 117 560
Sydney

midwife@ozemail.com.au

www.midwiferyeducation.com.au

Akal Khalsa

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.

Akal Khalsa 9660 2127

Sydney
0411 267 016

akal@ourmidwife.com.au

www.ourmidwife.com.au

Birth From Within

Personal holistic midwifery care during your special time of pregnancy, birth and parenthood. My philosophy is one of nonintervention, working in partnership with you and your family. I live in the Nowra/St Georges Basin area.

Robyn Borgas: 02 4443 2509

paul.borgas@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 9888 7829
(North Ryde)

midwifery@optusnet.com.au

www.homebirthmidwives.com.au

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: 0430 109 400

(Blue Mountains, West Sydney and Surrounding Suburbs)

www.independentmidwife.com.au

jacqui@independentmidwife.com.au

Wholistic Midwifery

I take a wholistic approach to pregnancy and birth, as well as to general health. I am a nutritionist and herbalist as well as a midwife, so my service can include these tools in your care. I provide full antenatal and postnatal homebirth care, as well as providing postnatal care for women who have birthed in hospital but return home soon afterwards. I practise in the Southern Highlands area.

Victoria Kleeberg

Southern Highlands

48 615 744 0404 489 484

kleeberg@bigpond.net.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 9873 1750

(Dundas Valley)

jane@pregnancy.com.au

www.pregnancy.com.au

Essential Birth Consulting

Offering midwifery services during preconception, pregnancy, birth and postnatal. Homebirth, hospital birth support, childbirth education, birth debriefing and consulting services are available. I practice in and around Sydney, as far as Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Camden. Essential Birth Consulting recognises you as being the most important person in the birthing experience, and homebirth assists you to have the healthiest birth possible. Essential Birth Consulting's home birth service focuses on your needs for confidence, choice and convenience in birth, with all visits provided in your home. Waterbirth and VBAC are supported. Journal subscriptions are available as well as access to a library.

Melissa Maimann 0400 418 448

MBA RM RN BN Grad Dip Midwifery

melissa@essentialbirthconsulting.com.au

www.essentialbirthconsulting.com.au

Areas covered: Sydney, Central Coast, Southern Highlands, Blue Mountains and Illawarra.

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 all areas west/south west of Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands and Illawarra.

Sonja MacGregor 0419 149 019

sonjamac@bigpond.com

www.birthathome.com.au

Birthing Babies

Birthing Babies is the private midwifery and antenatal education practice offered by midwife Victoria Jones. Victoria is an independently practicing midwife in Port Macquarie, on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. Birthing Babies conducts antenatal education weekends for women who want the latest information and education about pregnancy and birth in a fun, friendly, and supportive workshop format. We also offer birth support for women who plan to birth at home.

Victoria Jones 6581 4695

(Port Macquarie NSW)

www.birthingbabies.com.au

midwife@birthingbabies.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 midwives at the Birth Centre on 9113 3103.

Midwife

Jane is a shamanic midwife and a priestess of the Goddess. Her midwifery practice reflects these world views and is based on her facilitating women to take responsibility for their life journeys and the self-realisation opportunities of pregnancy, birth and mothering.

Author of Ten Moons - The Spiritual Journey of Pregnancy, Preparation For Natural Birth, Jane facilitates 3 day women only workshops called Pregnancy the Inner Journey and also teaches the spiritual practice of menstruation and the wisdom of the cycles.

Location: Southern Highlands, but will travel.

Jane Hardwicke Collings

0408 035 808

janecollings@bigpond.com

www.moonsong.com.au

My Midwife - Mother Baby Birth

I offer homebirth, hospital birth support and postnatal support with over 10 years experience. I have a special interest in VBAC and previous traumatic birth. Please feel free to contact me to discuss your options for pregnancy and birth. For more information please see my website. I work in Sydney and the Eastern Suburbs.

Kat Jordan El Karout

02 93264939 or 0404 440 113

midwife@live.com

www.mymidwife.com.au

HAS ANNUAL PICNIC SUNDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2010

11am - 2pm Jubilee Park, Glebe.

Meet at the corner of
Eglington & Northcote Roads Glebe
near the playground.
(Jubilee Park light rail stop)

ALL WELCOME -
bring partners and children.

Please BYO picnic fare, drinks
and blankets.

A great social opportunity for all
homebirth families to come together.

For more info please contact
Sarah on 0423 346 690

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Friday 26th February 2010

All members of Homebirth Access Sydney are invited to the 2009-2010 Annual General Meeting to be held at Jo Tilly's house, 50 Victoria Road, Marrickville on Friday 26th February 2010 from 10am onwards to:

- * Confirm the minutes of the last AGM.
- * Receive from the committee reports on the activities of the association during the last preceding financial year.
- * Elect office bearers of the association and ordinary members of the committee.
- * Receive and consider the financial statement to members and conduct other business of which notice has been given to the members.

For directions to Jo's house or to let her know you'll be attending, please call 9519 8524.

MAGAZINE ADVERTISING RATES

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

Coming soon: ONLINE ADVERTISING

For details, please email advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au

HAS ABN 75 947 458 113

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

Homebirth Access Sydney (HAS) Committee Meetings

*10.00am–12.00 noon on the last Friday of every month
At the home of Jo Tilly, 50 Victoria Road, Marrickville*

*There is an area for children to play while we meet.
Bring a plate or something to nibble*

**Please call to confirm meeting as there are
sometimes late changes: Jo Tilly 9519 8524**

Next meetings: 29 Jan, 26 Feb (AGM), 26 March

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



Diaries & pencils at the ready, please. It's time to get involved!

December	
Weekly	Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group. 10.30am - 12.30pm @ Gunammatta Park Cronulla (next to playground). We meet every Monday so come along and share stories and advice and a healthy snack with a group of like-minded women. Contact: Virginia 0415683074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
Thurs 3	Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group. 10am-12pm. Cost is \$5. Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance - if not come anyway. All welcome. Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara- dave-sara@bigpond.com
Thurs 17	Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group. 10am-12pm, Cost: \$5. Details as above.
January	
Weekly	Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group. 10.30am - 12.30pm @ Gunammatta Park Cronulla (next to playground). We meet every Monday so come along and share stories and advice and a healthy snack with a group of like-minded women. Contact: Virginia 0415683074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
Thurs 21	Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting. Topic: Pregnancy Testing. 10am-12pm @ Jane Palmer's house: 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley. 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.
Fri 29	HAS Committee meeting. 10am-12pm @ 50 Victoria Road, Marrickville. Please call Jo to confirm beforehand as there are sometimes late changes: 9519 8524. All welcome.
February	
Weekly	Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group. 10.30am - 12.30pm @ Gunammatta Park Cronulla (next to playground). We meet every Monday so come along and share stories and advice and a healthy snack with a group of like-minded women. Contact: Virginia 0415683074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
Mon 1	Birthings Autumn submissions deadline. Theme is "Natural Induction". Send your articles, birth stories and photos to editor@homebirthsydney.org.au Birthings Autumn advertising deadline. Contact advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au.
Sun 7	HAS Annual Picnic. 11am-2pm @ Jubilee Park Glebe. Meet at the corner of Eglinton and Northcote Roads Glebe, near the playground (Jubilee Park light rail stop) All welcome- bring partners and children. A great social opportunity for all Homebirth families to come together. For more info please call Sarah on 0423346690.
Thurs 11	Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group. Mid Mountains Community Centre, 3 New Street Lawson. 10am-12pm. Cost: \$2- \$5. Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. School Holidays is a casual catch up (played by ear) All welcome. Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara- dave-sara@bigpond.com
Thurs 18	Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting. Topic is 'Unexpected Outcomes', 10am-12pm @ Jane Palmer's house - 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley. 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.
Thurs 25	Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group. Mid Mountains Community Centre, 3 New Street Lawson. 10am-12pm. Cost: \$2- \$5. Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. School Holidays is a casual catch up (played by ear) All welcome. Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara- dave-sara@bigpond.com
Fri 26	HAS Committee meeting. 10am-12pm @ 50 Victoria Road, Marrickville. Please call Jo to confirm beforehand as there are sometimes late changes: 9519 8524. All welcome
Thurs 25	Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group. Mid Mountains Community Centre, 3 New Street Lawson. 10am-12pm. Cost: \$2- \$5. Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. School Holidays is a casual catch up (played by ear) All welcome. Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara- dave-sara@bigpond.com
Fri 26	HAS Annual General Meeting: 10am-12pm @ 50 Victoria Road, Marrickville. Please call Jo to confirm beforehand as there are sometimes late changes: 9519 8524. All welcome
March	
Weekly	Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group. 10.30am - 12.30pm @ Gunammatta Park Cronulla (next to playground). We meet every Monday so come along and share stories and advice and a healthy snack with a group of like-minded women. Contact: Virginia 0415683074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
Fri 5	Birth Choices Expo: 6-9pm Leichhardt Town hall guest speaker Peter Jackson founder of Calmbirth®. Introduction on creating a calmer birth environment. Visit www.homebirthsydney.org.au or see us on facebook for more info. For exhibitor & advertising opportunities, plus if you would like to volunteer to help, please contact events@homebirthsydney.org.au.
Thurs 11	Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group. Mid Mountains Community Centre, 3 New Street Lawson. 10am-12pm. Cost: \$2- \$5. Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. School Holidays is a casual catch up (played by ear) All welcome. Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara- dave-sara@bigpond.com
Thurs 18	Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting. Topic is vaccination, 10am-12pm @ Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley. 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
Thurs 25	Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group. Mid Mountains Community Centre, 3 New Street Lawson. 10am-12pm. Cost: \$2- \$5. Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. School Holidays is a casual catch up (played by ear) All welcome. Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara- dave-sara@bigpond.com
Fri 26	HAS Committee meeting. 10am-12pm @ 50 Victoria Road, Marrickville. Please call Jo to confirm beforehand as there are sometimes late changes: 9519 8524. All welcome

Note; Sutherland-St George group also meet weekly at Gunnamatta park Cronulla please contact Virginia for more details on 0415683074

ACUPUNCTURE
CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

M.Hith.Sc.TCM., Dip.App.Sc.Ac. AACMA accredited

Gabriele Rummel

Annandale Medical Practice 6 Macquarie St 9560 7928/2545
Lawson 16 Lawson Street 4759 3462
www.gabrielerrummel.com.au Mobile 0429 988 838

The topic for the next issue is

Natural Induction



**Submissions invited on your own experiences on Natural Induction:
things that worked, things that didn't, things that were fun
and those that were not!**

Reminder Update your membership details by email at member@homebirthsydney.org.au to ensure you continue to receive Birthings, as we may be switching to electronic format following the withdrawal of our sponsor.

BIRTHINGS is your magazine. **Please contribute!**
Submissions due 1st February 2010.

EMAIL THE EDITORS AT EDITOR@HOMEBIRTHSYDNEY.ORG.AU