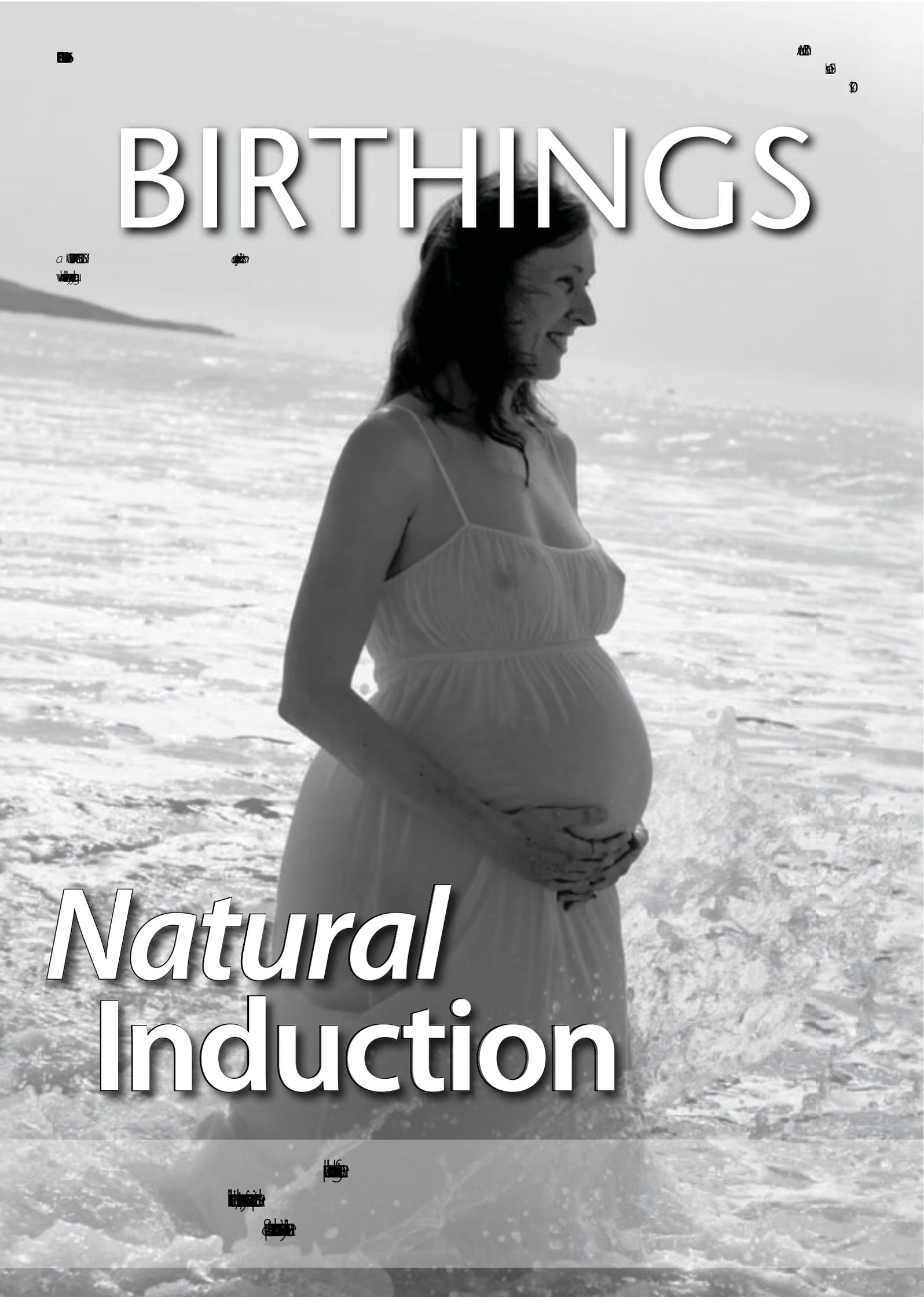


# BIRTHINGS

## *Natural* Induction



## Autumn 2010 Issue 105

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

### contributions, photos, correspondence

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

### deadlines for submissions

Winter 2010 No 106 - 1 May 2010  
Spring 2010 No 107—1 August 2010  
Summer 2011 No 108—1 November 2010  
Autumn 2011 No 109 - 1 February 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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\*Officers 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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## Membership

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

**Enquiries: [sales@homebirthsydney.org.au](mailto: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.

**JANE AINSWORTH** is a mum to Thomas (15 months) and shares a health and fitness business with her husband David. Jane is a Naturopath, passionate about preconception & pregnancy care & promoting natural birth. [www.trinityhealthandfitness.com.au](http://www.trinityhealthandfitness.com.au)

**HEATHER CRAWFORD** is an Acupuncturist, Doula and calmbirth® practitioner and is a 2nd year midwifery student. She practices from an integrative medical centre in Manly and runs calmbirth® classes and acupressure for labour workshops. For more information see: [www.birthingspirit.com.au](http://www.birthingspirit.com.au)

**VIRGINIA MADDOCK** is mother to 1-year-old Jetsun and 12-year-old Yin Yin (her beloved Burmese cat), and partner to Dan. She is a passionate herbalist, nutritionist and doula for her business Natural Beginnings, as well as Membership Coordinator for HAS and will also be taking on the role of Managing Editor for Birthings from next issue.

**SOFIA NYMAN** is a 28 years old mamma to Odin and married to Ash. She studies natural medicine and is very interested in self-empowerment in health. She loves bush walks and the magic of nature as well as learning and living.

**REGINA POWER** is the mother to Maia (2) and Kiran (10 weeks), who were both born at home with our dear midwife Betty Vella. Regina holds a Master's in counseling and in her previous life was an individual and family therapist as well as a K-12 school counselor. She is a doula and calmbirth® educator who is passionate about empowering women about their body's amazing ability to birth.

**PETRA TIMMERMANN** is mother to three beautiful boys – Oren (7), Leo (4) and Ellis (18 months). She is a part-time graphic designer, full-time mum and some-time doula who lives in a treehouse in the Northern Beaches with her husband Steve.

**AUBREY WICKS** is a stay at home mum to her 3 loving, wild, amazing boys. She became a doula in 2008, which she loves and hopes to expand as the boys get older. She recently moved back to her home in Minnesota, USA, closer to family. Yet her heart remains in Australia!

*Birthings* is designed by **PETRA TIMMERMANN**

# editorial



SARAH MCLEAN

## Well this is my last issue as editor and

I would like to thank the team that work on Birthings. It is no small feat putting together such a significant publication but it is so rewarding to share such beautiful and joyous birth stories within the homebirth community. As they say we are a 'small but vocal group' and often isolated in our beliefs about homebirth and so Birthings can certainly strengthen our bonds to each other.

This issue is about Natural Induction and even though as homebirthers we do not have the same constraints placed on us by hospital policy, some of us have been impatient to meet our little ones toward the end of our pregnancy as due dates come and go and sometimes medical intervention may be required.

Regina Powers has written a brilliant story about waiting for her baby Kiran and the roller coaster ride she went on daily after a 42 week and 5 day pregnancy. His birth story will be continued in the Winter issue of Birthings.

There is also an fascinating article by Heather

Crawford, a local Acupuncturist, doula and student midwife about the history and methods of Chinese medicine and acupuncture. A very practical article with lots of useful tips.

Also herbalist & doula Virginia Maddock has written an article about her own practice and what herbs can offer women about natural induction.

There are also four really beautiful birth stories and much more.

Finally, a huge thankyou to Petra Timmerman who has been designing Birthings for the past year and is also hanging up her clogs this edition. You have been so great to work with so best of luck with your new ventures.

Enjoy the read and think about how you can contribute to the next edition, which Virginia Maddock will be heading up with her team. The topic is 'Homebirth as Healer' so please think about submitting an article for review as it is your contributions which make it such a good read.

— Sarah xox



## New and renewed members

Thank you for your continued support.

Emma Povey  
Deb Southwood  
Suzee Brain  
Jade Alexander  
Narelle Johnson  
Sophie Prior  
Ema Perrott  
Karen Cockburn

Rilka Oakley  
Alison Bradford  
Lizzie Rose  
UTS Library  
Linda Hutchinson-  
West  
Victoria Kleeberg  
Dewi Eke

# birth announcements



Ash and Sofia Shephard-Nyman welcome

## ***Odin Shephard-Nyman***

Born 27 November 2010

Odin came to this world very quick and easy and he surprised as all by entering this world bottom first. Our midwife Jacqui made it just in time for his birth, but unfortunately half of the support team missed out. He arrived a healthy and peaceful little being, 3.9kg and 52cm long.

The only evidence of being born breech was a little bruised bottom for the first two days.



Jane Ainsworth & David Keefe welcome

## ***Thomas Ainsworth Keefe***

Born 26 July 2008

Our beautiful, healthy baby boy was born in the water at home at 7.38pm.

Thomas was welcomed by his Mum and Dad, our fabulous midwife Jacqui Wood & our dear friend & support person Michelle.



Regina, David, and Maia welcome

## ***Kiran S. Power***

Born 7 January 2010

Kiran was born in perfect time after a 42 week 5 day long pregnancy. It was an incredible lesson of patience and trust for his family. He was born in water after a 2.5 hour labour having been caught by his father and passed to his mother who pulled him out of the water into her awaiting arms.

Our gratitude and love go to our incredible midwife Betty Vella who never waived in her trust of our baby and Regina's body. We will feel forever blessed by your beautiful kindness and steady reassurance throughout our time together. Thank you for remembering the magic and Mother Nature's wisdom that women's bodies are beautifully designed for birth and babies know how and when to be born.

Also, many thanks to big sister Maia for remembering to stay quiet and present during the birth and to our support friends Kyle, Tamara and Cass, you are all so dear to us.

Send your birth announcements with a photograph to [editor@homebirthsydney.org.au](mailto:editor@homebirthsydney.org.au)

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## heart to heart

POETRY AND ARTWORK

By Amelia Allen

My children are growing  
Where is life going?  
It's seems so slippery-slick  
They play hide-and-peek,  
The days and the weeks  
This year my newborn turns  
six  
Put m' money on the table  
Each ounce I was able  
To plumb from the depths of  
my heart

At times galled by my failings  
Broken dreams trailing  
Striving yet falling apart  
Until Grace shines in  
And unlatches the pin  
Where I fastened myself in a  
knot  
As I breathe, so I grow  
I see them and know  
We're giving it all we're got.

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

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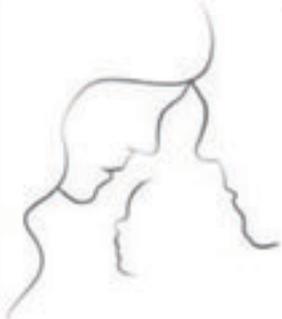
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# coordinator's report



JO TILLY

oldies in the public hospital system have been pretty good. Hospitals are, by and large, great places to be when you are actually sick and need medical attention. But as we all know, if you're a healthy woman, they tend not to be great places to give birth.

The good story about the public health system has been highlighted in the media over the last few months with the release of a report evaluating the first 100 births at the St George Hospital Homebirth program. (See the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology 2009, 49)

St George was the first publicly funded homebirth program in NSW when it was established in 2005, and is still one of only four in Australia. Of the first 100 births, 63 women birthed at home, 30 were transferred to mainstream hospital or independent midwifery care and 7 were transferred during labour.

The evaluation found that overall these were good outcomes and that this model could be expanded, provided that there were processes in place for appropriate collaboration between midwives and doctors, and for referral and transfer if necessary.

And herein lies the real bone of contention. Should midwives be subject to government imposed guidelines and rules about the management of women in their care and that require collaboration with doctors? Or should it be enough that we acknowledge that they are qualified experts in normal birth and let them make their own professional judgements? Many would say that a 30% transfer rate in a homebirth program is way too high and that this reflects guidelines which are too restrictive.

But for those of us who are mothers, not birth professionals, risk management guidelines provide us with a level of reassurance. And this kind of reassurance is especially important if we want to make homebirth available more widely to women across the community. The kind of women who access programs like the one at St George will not necessarily be the upper middle class mums (like me!) who can afford a private

midwife and have an existing philosophical commitment to homebirth.

This is the very issue that is being played out at the moment as the federal government develops their Quality and Safety Framework. Independent midwives must adhere to this framework if they are to be registered under the national registration and accreditation scheme. And there are some real problems with the proposals as it stands – particularly the requirement for midwives to provide evidence of collaboration with doctors about the women in their care.

The Australian Medical Association and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have specific policies of not supporting homebirth. It is unrealistic to expect that members of these organisations will readily enter into collaborative arrangements with midwives who provide homebirth services to women.

But nonetheless, from the perspective of consumers, these kind of frameworks do provide us with more information about the kind of care we should be receiving.

HAS will be participating in national consultations over the next few weeks about this issue and I would value your input. One of the greatest strengths of our organisation is our broad membership and I would encourage you to let us know what you think about these proposals for homebirth to be more formalised in Australia.

On the plus side it offers the opportunity to expand homebirth much more widely into the community, but on the down side it is likely to see decreased autonomy for independent midwives and as a result to the women in their care. Let me know what you think – if you would like more information about the proposals or would like to share your ideas, please contact me at [jotilly2009@gmail.com](mailto:jotilly2009@gmail.com)

In the meantime, have fun trying all those ideas for natural induction!

- Jo

**I don't know about you, but my** holiday season didn't seem to quieten down at all this year. In between all the political activity that's been going on in Canberra since our last issue (see Alison's 'the Personal is Political' for all the details) our family has had Christmas celebrations, holidays, endured that special kind of hell that is moving house, started the 5 year old at school, had a birthday for the tweenager, watched bubby learn some cute new tricks like smiling and rolling over and had two grandfathers in hospital. It's been a very dramatic start to the year and I'm hoping for a bit more calm over the next few months... but it's probably good I'm not holding my breath. Things show no sign of easing up as we move into 2010.

On the positive side, I'm pleased to report that our experiences with our



# Herbal Induction

VIRGINIA MADDOCK

*Induction: 3. Process of hastening birth; MEDICINE the act or the process of medically hastening the birth of a baby* (English Encarta Dictionary)

I believe women's bodies are well designed for the process of birth to go well. That said, not everything left to its own devices will be without problems. There are numerous factors that influence birth in our modern society including nutrition, lifestyle and the mother's environment, which can affect her ability to give birth naturally and spontaneously. Obstetric care too often has unreasonable and unrealistic pressures on the birthing process, forcing women to birth within specific time frames that are unnatural for the woman and her baby.

In many cases herbs can be used to hasten the initial start of labour, or a stalled labour, by increasing the production of oxytocin to stimulate the uterus to contract, enabling the avoidance of an unnecessary medical induction or augmentation, which can lead to more pain for the woman, stress for the baby and the resulting cascade of interventions.

Since studying a post-graduate course for herbal medicine for pregnancy in 2005, I have used herbal medicine to naturally induce women who are overdue and have an impending medical induction looming. Fortunately homebirth midwives and their clients tend to trust in the natural process to let babies go at least 2 weeks or more past their due date, as long as the baby is doing well (so I have not yet had any clients take them who are outside the hospital system, other than myself!)

However going overdue is not the only reason to hasten the baby's arrival. In the case of premature (ie. pre-labour) rupture of membranes, most women will go into labour naturally within 24 hours, but a certain percentage will not commence labour until up to 48 hours later or not at all, due to an insufficient intrinsic production of oxytocin. If this occurs it is termed prolonged rupture of membranes (PROM), and is associated with a higher rate of infection to the baby, particularly in the presence of group B strep which at least 30% of women carry (and may be untested if planning a homebirth). In this case, having to book into hospital for an induction may be avoided by immediately taking herbs to boost the immune system and initiate labour by increasing oxytocin. (In the case of PROM occurring prior to 37 weeks, the primary concern is to prevent premature labour by using herbs to relax the

uterine muscles, as well as boost immunity to prevent infection).

Any natural induction is not guaranteed to work within a limited time frame, but there are certain factors that will influence the success of herbal induction:

- The cervix must be soft and ripe, otherwise the woman's contractions will be forcing the baby's head against a hard cervix that will be resistant to opening to let the baby out, which would be more painful and put the baby into distress. In this case I would advise against a herbal induction, unless first attempting to help ripen the cervix with the internal supplementation and external application directly to the cervix of evening primrose oil (and advising to have lots of sex!), due to its ability to boost prostaglandin production.
- It is also desirable for the baby to be in correct position. If the baby is posterior and unengaged then its head will not be on the cervix, and labour is likely to take longer to start, if at all.

Below are some examples of my experience inducing births using herbs:

Krystal was 35 weeks and five days pregnant with twins and was told by her obstetrician that one of her twins had stopped growing, so she was told they would induce her that evening which she desperately wanted to avoid. Krystal booked in to have some acupuncture that day and I gave her some herbs to take hourly. Fortunately she went into labour after about 4 hours and was grateful to have avoided the medical induction. (Her first baby was born naturally but the 2nd twin had turned transverse so she had to have an emergency caesarean to get it out quickly).

Michelle was 41 weeks pregnant and trying for a VBAC due to her last baby being breech and delivered by caesarian. She was booked in for a repeat caesarean in 4 days which she wanted to avoid. She had previously had herbs before and said she was very sensitive to them. I left her with the herbs and a few days later she called me up to say that she had gone into labour straight after the first dose and had had her baby naturally.

Alicia was ten days overdue. She had been to see her obstetrician that day who told her that the baby was unengaged, and he booked her in for an induction for the very next morning. So I went over early that evening and

---

gave her a herbal tonic, to be taken every hour until bedtime, a warm castor oil pack to be applied to the base of her belly, as well as some evening primrose oil to be taken internally + rubbed onto the cervix. The following morning she reported that she had increased Braxton Hicks during the night however full labour had not been initiated, so she was induced with prostaglandin gel and went into labour that day. Unfortunately due to the baby's position, it may have taken a few days which we did not have, so time was not on her side!

Herbal induction can work quickly or it can take days depending on the body and baby's readiness, so if an induction is planned for then it is best to start a few days in advance, as I believe that it is preferable to have a baby come slightly earlier than it wants to via natural therapies, than a stressed out baby from the unnaturally strong contractions that come from medical inductions that too often can lead to an emergency caesarian.

In my own pregnancy I had been using a herbal "partus prep" tonic since 34 weeks to help prepare my body for labour, but my baby was stubbornly posterior and unengaged (most likely due to my short torso and sway back) right to the end, despite all my efforts at positioning my body forward and getting acupuncture and regular chiropractic work.

When I was 10 days over due, I asked my midwife to check that my cervix was ripe to see if it was OK to start herbally inducing my baby, which it was. While she was there, with my permission she did a stretch and sweep of my membranes. My baby was still unengaged and posterior but I started taking a herbal induction tonic to help get things started. Two nights later I had planned to go out for a hot curry dinner but decided against it at the last minute. I went into labour that night anyway. Who knows if it was the herbs, the membrane sweep or the sexual activity immediately preceding it, or whether it was just the right time that he was ready to come out – maybe it was all factors combined (a multi-factorial approach will definitely increase success!). I know if I had gone out for the hot curry dinner, I would probably have attributed it to that too, but I am sure the herbs were a big help. (He was born 13 days past my due date). What brings a baby out at a certain time is one of life's great mysteries!

If an induction is planned for or you are just well and truly over it (as only an overly pregnant woman can know the feeling), herbal medicine is certainly worth trying to coax the little one to earth quicker. Just be sure to see a professional herbalist who has experience in herbally inducing labour.

*\*All names have been changed to respect privacy and protect the identity of my clients.*



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# Waiting for Kiran

REGINA POWER

**When I received the last issue of Birthings and** read the topic for this month, "Inductions," I thought to myself, "Why would home birth mothers consider inductions given we are out of the system and don't have the same pressures as other Mums who are pushed to abide by hospital regulations that state that 40 weeks plus 10 days is the magic number for every baby?" I figured if it was medically necessary, home birth Mums would obviously need to consider an induction, but why push a baby to come before he or she is ready as wouldn't it be best to give them the time to choose their birth date and wouldn't it be more interesting to find out which day they decided was their special moment to land in their parents arms? Those thoughts came a few days before we were due to have our baby on December 19, 2009 and my "wouldn't it be more interesting to wait and see theory" nearly went out the window several times as I rode the roller coaster of "overdue" emotions up and down for exactly 19 days and weathered the emotional storm of being overdue during my 42 week 5 day pregnancy.

The irony of being so far overdue was that I always say in my prenatal classes that a normal gestation is between 37-42 weeks and that it is important to not tell yourself that you are going to have your baby early as most babies come after their due date. So what did I do? About midway through our pregnancy, I told our midwife, Betty Vella, that David and I both had a feeling separate to speaking to each other that our sweet little mummy was going to arrive around December 15. I was not only going to have our baby before his due date, but we had actually intuitively figured out the date of our baby's birth. Laugh. Now if that doesn't smell like a bit of trouble, then it is no wonder that I nearly lost the plot on several occasions.

December 15 came and went and I was frustrated as my theory flew out the window, where was our baby? Maybe he will be like our daughter and be born on his due date, but what was the likelihood of that happening? My main worry was that our baby would be born on Christmas and I really didn't want a baby born during the holidays. Little did I know that our baby heard me loud and clear and decided to be way on the other side of the holidays.

His due date, December 19, went by and I was o.k. I figured, wouldn't it be amazing to have a baby on the summer solstice? December 22 slipped past and we were headed for the holidays. I kept telling myself to let our baby decide when he wanted to come and be patient. Any day was fine with us, but Christmas. I didn't want to be controlling; I just kept picking the days of MY preference for birthdays. Laugh.

Then, my next hiccup was telling myself that most babies come within a week after their due date. That week



came and went and so did my frustration as I started to also value moments together with my husband and our two-year old knowing that our lives were about to change dramatically. We still had no desire to induce our baby and wanted to give him the time he needed, but maybe a bit of sex would encourage him just before Christmas. Sex was nice actually, the orgasms were fabulous, I felt some more intensity in the braxton hicks waves through the day and then, NOTHING. "O.K.," I thought to myself, "No more trying. I was just going to let this baby decide on his day. He must have some unique date picked out. Oh, a blue moon on December 31 and a partial lunar eclipse. My baby is going to be born on December 31." David suggested on that morning that maybe if I laid out in our back yard naked under the full moon that might trigger the labour. I laughed at the thought as that was the most creative induction method we had come up with yet, but decided to pass on the idea.

January 1 at 2.00am I woke up. David woke up. Both wide awake we decided to use our time on the couch pressing on some gentle acupressure points. Wouldn't 01/01/10 be such a cool birth date? At least the light touch massage was nice for both of us as I woke up pregnant as ever when the sun came up that morning. Mornings were the hardest part of the day. I knew that nothing had happened during the night and as the day wore on, I became hopeful each evening that my labour might start and we would be holding our baby as the sun rose the next day.

Worry started to over take me. Our midwife had another

mother who was due on January 5 and she went early with her first baby. What was the chance that our baby would come on the same day? Should I use those herbs that our friend Gin had made up for us? No, I didn't want to start our birth story; I wanted our baby to start the birth. Little did I know, I was birthing a lesson in patience and trust as I still had one more week.

Betty came on Sunday, January 3. I was 42 weeks plus one day and surprised to still be pregnant as Betty, David and I figured we would have our baby sometime during the week. We even booked the appointment in the morning thinking it would be a post-natal appointment. Betty was not phased and very confident and trusting of my body and our baby. David and I had said the week before that if we were still pregnant on Sunday, we would do the first ultrasound of our pregnancy on Monday. After listening to our baby's heartbeat, which was really loud, clear and strong, we not worried in the least, nor was Betty, so we decided to wait and see if we would have our baby in the coming week. Nonetheless, we figured that it wouldn't hurt to have Betty do some gentle reflexology. That day came and went and so did the night. Thankfully, the reflexology did nothing to encourage our baby to come as the next morning Betty's other client had her baby. I was so relieved and gone was the worry that we would miss out on having Betty at our birth.

Wednesday, January 5, I cried before I went to bed, each time I got up to use the toilet, and in the morning when the sun rose as there was no movement to indicate that the birth was going to start and I was so over being pregnant. I had lost the plot and hit a wall. I was not willing to do any other types of inductions like a sweep of my cervix, acupuncture, or herbs. I really wanted my baby to choose his day. The wait was the longest of my life. I called Betty and just started crying on the phone. We sat there and talked about any fears that I might have about the birth. My fear of the baby getting stuck came up again and I realized that it was my birth story coming up as my mother had been asleep during my birth and I was stuck in the birth passage without my mother able to push me and also being drugged not being able to use my own push to come out. But this birth would be different. I was going to be awake, moving around and assisting our baby. He would be aware and able to use his power to push his way through with my uterus working with us. Speaking to Betty, I had compared being pregnant to being on a train and only being able to get off when the baby decided



on the stop. Betty told me that I needed to get back on the train and trust as we both knew I was trying to jump off before the final stop. I got back on my pregnancy journey. That evening, I started to feel some changes in my body indicating that we were approaching the final station if not that night; it wouldn't be too far away.

At 3.45am on January 7, I happily told my husband that I felt I was in pre-labour and we sent a text to Betty to let her know so she would not go to work that morning. I slept through the night until our toddler woke up at 6.00am. Still in pre-labour, I wondered if it would all fizzle out with the sun and our toddler rising. Betty assured me I would continue to progress. I was so comforted by her reassurance.

At 7.00am, the waves started to come every few minutes and at first I wondered if I was in established labour, but after about twenty minutes, we were calling our support people to come to the house. When Betty arrived at 7.40am, I asked her to check how dilated I was and she asked if I really wanted to know? With all my practice in relaxation and meditation in preparation for the birth, I have such an easy time with the first stage of labour that it is hard for me or a midwife to tell where I might be as I look and sound so relaxed and with it. I went on to say to Betty that the control freak in me needed to know as I had been so out of control this whole pregnancy. She laughed and announced that I was already 8cm. We had already had the pool filled and ready, so I gleefully jumped in.

Full birth story continued next edition.....



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# Acupuncture for Labour Encouragement

HEATHER CRAWFORD



## What is Acupuncture?

The origins of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine dates back several thousand years and the earliest recordings of their use in pregnancy and childbirth have been found on bones and tortoise shells from the Shang Dynasty (1500 – 1000BC). The basis of all Eastern medicine is energy or Qi which is the life force that gives everything in the universe it's beingness. The Leijing, a classical Chinese medical text describes it as:

'...the source wherefrom the sun, moon and stars derive their light, the thunder, rain, wind and cloud their being, the four seasons and the myriad things their birth, growth, gathering and storing: all this is brought about by Qi. Man's possession of life is completely dependant on this Qi.'

Qi flows through the body via channels called 'meridians' and is the force that breathes us, beats our heart, digests our food, brings tears to our eyes and grows babies in our bellies.

Acupuncture aims to maintain or restore balance to the flow of Qi in the body by using pressure (acupressure), insertion of needles or application of heat (moxa) at points along the meridians. The beauty of Eastern Medicine is that it treats the root cause of the imbalance, rather than just the symptom and there is no separation perceived between body, mind and spirit – it is truly wholistic medicine.

## Can it help if I go post-term?

Babies come on their birthdays. Just a cursory study of the literature available on the accuracy of due dates and some faith in our body's wisdom would be enough to stall most women's worries about going post-term. However, there are imbalances that can occur that will stall spontaneous labour and occasionally lead to post maturity (not the same as 'post dates') and acupuncture can be an effective treatment to restore balance and allow a woman to go into labour naturally.

## What is involved in acupuncture treatment for labour encouragement?

Acupuncture treatment for labour encouragement will vary depending on the imbalance of the particular woman. In Eastern Medicine, the main imbalances in this case are either from deficiency or stagnation of Qi or Blood (or both) or a disharmony between the Heart-Fire and Kidney-Water energies, usually also causing emotional imbalance and sleep disturbance.

Qi and Blood deficiency may be due to overwork, previous heavy blood loss or a history of heavy periods, lack of proper nourishment prior to and during pregnancy, short gaps between pregnancies or a history of fertility

issues. It can also be caused by premature rupture of membranes (not to be confused with spontaneous rupture of membranes at full term). Women with Qi and Blood deficiency will usually be tired and possibly have symptoms such as insomnia, haemorrhoids or anaemia.

Along with acupuncture and possibly herbal medicine, treatment of Qi and Blood deficiency will usually include the use of moxabustion, where the herb, mugwort, is lit and used in various forms on or near the body, creating warmth and nourishing the deficiency. Most women absolutely love it. Organic chicken soup, slow-cooked (with love) complete with bones is great for Qi and Blood deficiency and can also be frozen for a wonderfully restorative post-birth meal (a brilliant gift for a new mum).

Fear and anxiety, often to do with the upcoming birth (but can also be due to other factors) can injure the Kidney qi. This can hinder the ability of the Kidney 'water' energy to balance the Heart 'fire' energy. In Chinese medicine this is called Kidney and Heart not communicating and can manifest as anxiety, insomnia and sensations of heat. Apart from acupuncture, which can help to balance the energies of the Kidney and Heart, meditation and visualization can be very useful. Here is a visualization that can be done in just a few minutes or drawn out over 20 minutes depending on how much time you have:

Set aside time when you won't be disturbed. Close your eyes and breath into your belly. Visualise the heart as a lotus flower, with the roots going all the way down the legs and into the earth, drawing the water up through them to the blooming lotus flower heart.

You can also talk to your midwife, your partner or a friend about your fears or write about them in a journal. Just acknowledging them can be very helpful.

Another imbalance that is caused by emotional factors is Qi stagnation. We work too hard trying to be all things to all people, get frustrated with our family members and with ourselves for letting it all get to us. Our constant desire for things to be other than they are causes a disruption to the smooth flow of qi, which only leads to more frustration.

Qi stagnation manifests as irritability and frustration and may also be accompanied by sleep disturbance, increased sensation of heat (although this can be normal in pregnancy), heartburn, rib pain and high blood pressure. A woman who suffered from bad premenstrual tension before pregnancy will usually have issues with qi stagnation in later pregnancy, so if this sounds like you it is a good idea to find ways to restore balance now rather than waiting for it to pull you up later.

Acupuncture is very effective for restoring the body's

“... Babies know when to be born ...”



balance and the smooth flow of qi, but there are plenty of other things you can do. Getting out into nature (or just outdoors), doing moderate exercise and practicing meditation are all great ways to regulate and restore the flow of qi. Finding ways to be at peace with the present moment will do wonders, not just for the health of your body, but for your relationships as well. This includes not beating yourself up if you do find yourself getting frustrated and snappy – a good dose of self-acceptance and love can do wonders. If meditation is not your thing there are plenty of books out there but if you are not much of a reader talks by great teachers like Eckhart Tolle and Byron Katie can be found in abundance on Youtube (see resources).

#### Can acupuncture help me prepare for a natural spontaneous labour?

Eastern medicine is true preventative medicine. In China, doctors used to be paid when their patients were well and illness could be taken as a sign that the doctor had not done his job properly. There is usually little need for a labour encouragement treatment when a woman has been coming for acupuncture in the last weeks of pregnancy. Through listening and through palpation of the pulse and observation of the tongue, an acupuncturist can pick up subtle imbalances and correct them during treatment before they manifest as symptoms in the bodymind.

There have now been several studies indicating that weekly pre-birth acupuncture treatment from 36-37 weeks improves birth outcomes. A small New Zealand study of the routine practice of 14 midwives over 4 months found that pre-birth acupuncture treatment in 169 women resulted in 35% reduction in inductions (43% in first-time mums), 31% reduction in epidurals, 32% reduction in c-sections and overall the women had shorter labours compared to women receiving similar midwifery care without acupuncture.

#### What can I do at home?

Doing what you can to create a healthy diet and lifestyle that balances body, mind and spirit can be easier said than done. Yet it is amazing the differences that just one small change can make. Some form of meditation will help greatly. This does not have to involve sitting in silence on a cushion and can take many forms, including keeping a journal, practicing mindful presence while doing the dishes or taking the time each morning before you wake to be grateful for your body, the warm bed or the amazing being growing in your belly.

If you can enlist your partner or a friend to help you, then sacral massage in the weeks before birth will help to free up blocked qi in the pelvic/sacral region and can facilitate smoother birthing. Acupuncturist and naturopath, Heather Bruce has put together an E-Book that goes over the technique <http://tiny.cc/heatherbruce> and there are plenty of free resources on her website [www.heatherbruce.com.au](http://www.heatherbruce.com.au)

You can also access many free resources online, including a great acupressure booklet on the website of NZ Acupuncturist and Midwife, Debra Betts: <http://tiny.cc/acupressure>. The booklet includes points to

use in labour and for induction of labour if needed.

#### What else can I do?

There are many great modalities out there that can help restore balance and help you go into labour naturally. I favour gentle modalities that honour the body's wisdom such as homeopathy and cranio-sacral therapy. So find what works for you. There however plenty you can do from home.

Sex is traditionally recommended to bring on labour, not just to expose the cervix to the prostaglandins in the sperm but also because the loving touch of your partner (and nipple stimulation) releases oxytocin which is not just the 'Hormone of love' as the French obstetrician Michel Odent says, but the hormone that drives the contractions. Just don't use up all your energy – you might need it later!

Anything that stimulates the bowel can in turn (due to proximity) stimulate the uterus to start contracting. This is the theory behind advice to eat hot curries, drink orange juice and down castor oil (if you have tried EVERYTHING else and are considering the castor oil, consult your midwife first).

Aromatherapy can be effective and if you are postdates (and not before, unless you consult an aromatherapist) you can apply a massage oil with 3-5% of Clary Sage essential oil twice a day after a shower or put a few drops in your bath, foot soak or oil burner. You can also add Rose or Jasmin oil for hormonal balance.

If you want to try acupuncture it is good to find someone who specialises in women's health and pregnancy. There are several multi-modality clinics popping up in Sydney that specialise in pregnancy care. In the north there is the Ambaa Tree [www.theambaatree.com.au](http://www.theambaatree.com.au) and in the eastern suburbs there is The Red Tent [www.redtent.com.au](http://www.redtent.com.au).

While spontaneous labour can be encouraged with balancing therapies and some forms of labour induction are obviously more gentle than others, is there really such a thing as 'natural' induction? Babies know when to be born and by ensuring we are balanced and healthy with adequate rest, nutrition and self-love, we can have confidence in our body's wisdom and intelligence and enjoy the last days of pregnancy trusting our babies to choose their birthday.

#### RESOURCES:

"Loving What Is" by Byron Katie: [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com)

"The Power of Now" and "A New Earth" by Eckhart Tolle

Foetal positioning can also be a reason for delayed labour: [www.spinningbabies.com](http://www.spinningbabies.com)

Gloria Lemay's Article 'Ten Month Mamas': <http://tiny.cc/tenmonth>

Comprehensive information on Postdates: <http://tiny.cc/gentlebirth>

*Heather Crawford is an Acupuncturist, Doula and calmbirth® practitioner and is a 2nd year midwifery student. She practices from an integrative medical centre in Manly and runs calmbirth® classes and acupressure for labour workshops. For more information see: [www.birthingspirit.com.au](http://www.birthingspirit.com.au)*

# Odin's Birth Story

SOFIA NYMAN

**My husband Ash and I got up late on** a Thursday morning. We both had the day off and we were having our midwife Jacqui over at midday. I felt a bit grumpy without knowing why but pregnancy had taught me much about accepting whatever emotion I was in so I tried to embrace it for what it was. It was a hot day and Jacqui arrived eager for a cold drink after the one kilometre bush walk from her car. We enjoyed cold water while chatting and checking on the baby. During the palpation she made me aware of the braxton hicks contractions, which I'd felt for a while without paying much attention. I was due on the following Tuesday so it felt rather like, 'I see you when I see you' even though we said, "See you next Thursday." When she left Ash and I talked about how great she was and for the first time I felt like I was ready for this birth. Before I had felt like there was more to prepare in the house and more meditation and grounding work to do on myself. Now I finally felt that it was all good.

I was reading on the veranda while Ash was fixing up our peddle-powered washing



machine. It was about 4:00pm when I felt a different sensation. I realised it was 'the show' when I saw the mucous plug in my undies. I told Ash and an overwhelming feeling spread all over my body: this was it, there was no turning back, I had to surrender to the moment and completely trust my body's ability to birth. I contacted Jacqui and my two friends Bec and Heidi who were to attend the birth. I knew this was the start of a long, challenging journey. The advice I received was to rest, eat well and try to get a good night's sleep.

The small contractions were constantly present. I was in bed reading and feeling my uterus go hard and relax and go hard again. They became more and more frequent but not very intense. All of a sudden they changed and I wasn't comfortable lying down anymore. Ash and I started to clear out the living room for the pool and we set up the big tent for our friends to rest in during and after the birth process. A dear friend called from overseas for a chat and I happily announced that I thought I was in pre-labour. The contractions felt like small cramps in my loins and thighs and I couldn't sit down when they came over me. I couldn't keep up the conversation with the same ease and I felt like I had to quietly go through them alone. It was about six or 7:00pm and I informed Jacqui and my friends about the change. I got the same advice again about good food and sleep. Jacqui and I decided that we'd be in touch the following morning for any updates.

Ash and I had a delicious dinner and I went to bed around 10:00pm. Ash slid away to dreamland and I was trying to fully relax through the contractions with a hot water bottle on my groin. A storm came over with relaxing rain and charged with electricity. I told Ash that I thought I might birth tonight. At 11:00pm I couldn't lie in bed anymore; I needed to stand up and move. I knew it was important to rest and I tried to sleep sitting up at the end of the bed. Every contraction got me back up on my feet, moving to the sound of a deep singing sound. I felt a strong urge to go to the toilet so I peed several times without any relief in the urge. At 12:30am my waters broke on the bathroom floor. It was such a relief—the urge to pee was now gone.

I called my friend Bec (a trained midwife) and I knew she would have some words of wisdom for me. She asked me about the contractions and I tried to describe the new sensations; they weren't painful but they were intense. I was standing in the bathroom and when a contraction came to me I passed the phone to Ash. I had an intense urge to poo



and I threw up in the toilet (oh that beautiful dinner!). The contractions felt different again now. I felt like I needed to push but told myself that it couldn't be since I knew that that was a sign of the actual birth. It was probably just before 1:00am when Bec rang again. I laughed and said that all I felt like was doing a poo.

Another contraction came upon me and I passed the phone to Ash. I overheard him

asking if it was time to put water in the pool and I heard her respond that if I wanted to birth in it we'd better fill it up now. She also told him to call Jacqui straight away. He called her up and she said that she was on her way. It would take her about 35 minutes to get to us. I really felt like I wanted Jacqui or Bec with me, someone who could tell me that it was ok to surrender to the pushing urge. During the following minutes I was standing on my toes, holding Ash and trying not to surrender to this amazing sensation of pushing. It was so hard and sometimes I just couldn't resist the urge--pushing was so satisfying. Ash filled the pool between my contractions but I really needed him with me at this stage. My whole body wanted to squat down and birth but I wasn't confident doing it on my own.

Finally Jacqui walked in and I said, "Please tell me that I can push?" In a calm voice she answered, "Yes, birth your baby". I was still standing up and I was at last surrendering to the awesome feeling of pushing. She saw the head and in between contractions I felt it there in between my thighs. I was so surprised. She asked me if I was comfortable as I was and I answered yes. Since we hadn't realised the

urgency of the situation the pool water was too hot. Jacqui put sheets out on the floor next to the pool instructing me to lean over the edge. After the second push the baby poohed on Jacqui and she realised it was breech. She instructed me to stand up. I stood up in the pool and leaned on Ash. Heidi arrived and was asked to pour another bucket of cold water into the pool.

During the next push or so I felt myself opening up completely and with ease. I turned around and saw Jacqui holding our little baby. She handed him over and I sat down in the pool with a slippery little miracle. I was so surprised and couldn't believe that he was already with us. Bec arrived 30 minutes later with her husband and baby only to witness the less exciting placenta birth. We were all having a little celebration feast of mangoes and chocolate in our bed admiring our little new friend.

Odin was born 2:05am on the 27th of November. He was 52cm long and weighed 3.9kg. Thank you Ash, Jacqui, Bec and Heidi for supporting me through this amazing birth. And thank you Odin, our beautiful bum-first baby, for the excellent teamwork!

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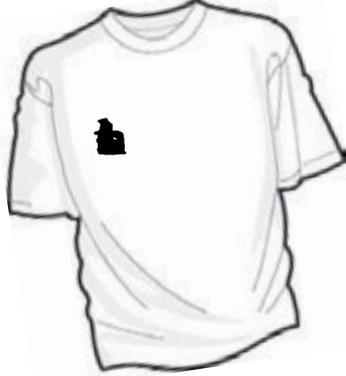
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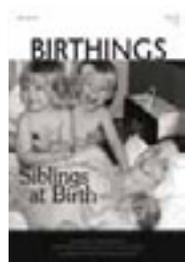
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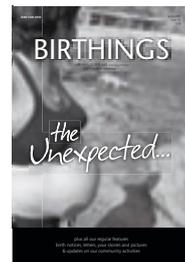
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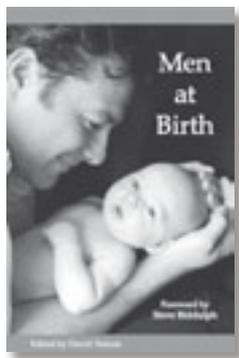


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Each of the 30 stories was specifically written for this book. They are often funny, sometimes sad, but all will be of interest to men entering the childbirth and parenting journey. Aust 2006  
011BK \$29.95



**HAVING A GREAT BIRTH IN AUSTRALIA**  
David Vernon

This is a collection of candid stories from 20 Australian women who have recently given birth. These stories tell, with honesty and insight, about the challenges and joys of childbirth. Each of these women discovered the value of being able to make informed decisions about their maternity care and with the right care, had positive and empowering birth experiences. Aust 2005  
012BK \$24.95



**TEN MOONS**  
Jane Hardwicke Collings

A unique guide to pregnancy and birth. This book offers practical tools and suggestions to help women reconnect with the spiritual side of birth. The spiritual journey of pregnancy and natural childbirth are acknowledged in relationship to the earth's natural rhythms. Subjects covered include, letting go of fear, connecting with the baby inside you, yoga and meditation.  
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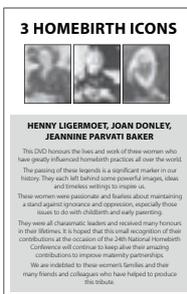
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# HATHOR the COWGODDESS

SO, TODAY I SIGNED 2 PETITIONS, ADDED MY NAME TO 3 MASS E-MAILINGS, AND FORWARDED 4 ARTICLES TO ACTIVIST LISTS... ALL WITH A CLICK OF A BUTTON



BUT THEN I WONDER, WHERE DOES IT ALL GO? IS IT FOR NAUGHT? IS MY COMPUTER SOAKING UP MY RADICAL ENERGY? KEEPING ME QUIET AND COOPERATIVE?

WHAT ABOUT REAL LETTERS WITH STAMPS?

PETITIONS, HAND-DELIVERED?

OFFICE SIT-INS?

FACE-TO-FACE WITH REPRESENTATIVES?

ARGUING IN PERSON?

MASSIVE PROTESTS? STRIKES?

STREET ACTIONS? ART?

Heather Cushman-Dowdee, long-time creator of the comic, Hathor the Cowgoddess, is now creating all new comics over at [www.mama-is.com](http://www.mama-is.com). Come by and see what's happening, last I heard Mama is...breastfeeding her new baby! AND, you can still see all of the Hathor comics at [www.thecowgoddess.com](http://www.thecowgoddess.com), too.

# Thomas's Birth Story

JANE AINSWORTH

## I would like to start by saying how

much I admire those of you who have your birth stories in soon after the birth of your child. Thomas is approaching 16 months and I have only this week watched my birth video for the first time! Somewhere amongst a years worth of cards, letters and photos is a piece of paper with the timing of my contractions and their intensity so these details will be left out of my story.

My husband David and I had completed an extensive six month preconception care program and thankfully we conceived on our second attempt. I had previously arranged a



meeting with midwife Jacqui Wood so Dave could meet her and it just happened to be on the day we found out I was pregnant! Dave didn't need much convincing that Jacqui was the perfect woman for us. I am a naturopath so I chose to have no scans or tests during my pregnancy and Jacqui respected and supported all of our decisions. As a result my pregnancy was healthy, happy and intervention-free.

We calculated 40 weeks gestation gave us a due date of 28th July. From our very first meeting Jacqui joked with us saying, "Just tell that baby of yours that they can't come on the weekend of the 26th-27th of July because that's the midwives conference in the Blue Mountains." So guess what? I woke up on Saturday 26th July at 4:45am having a mild contraction. I had a few contractions the previous evening but nothing at all through this night. So knowing Jacqui was leaving first thing in the morning I called her and she said she would stay in Sydney; we were having a baby today! She suggested we go back to bed and get as much rest as possible—yeah right! We sat in bed and had a cup of tea and a cuddle and kept saying to each other, "This is it, our baby is arriving today."

Around 9am I called my neighbour/dear friend/naturopath and support person Michelle and told her my contractions had started. She too was meant to go to a seminar that day— I was ruining plans left, right and centre! Michelle was not at all fazed and came over ready to help. Dave left to go shopping and get last-minute food supplies, a HUGE beanbag and Geoffrey Gurrumul's CD which ended up being played when Thomas arrived. Michelle and I sat around chatting and watching movies, briefly interrupted by me getting up and leaning against the wall and rolling my hips during each contraction. It seemed like the most natural thing to do. Dave set about getting our birth space ready; rearranging furniture to make space for the birth pool, setting out the candles, oil burner and CDs so we were all ready to go.

It was the most beautiful, clear winter's day so Dave and I sat in the backyard reading the newspaper and chatting (again interspersed with leaning against the clothesline for a contraction). It was all going along smoothly. Meanwhile, Michelle had gone home to cook some yummy pumpkin soup which would be my last meal before the big guns kicked in.

At 3pm I called Jacqui to say the contractions were more intense but manageable. She was at the gym and said she would come over after that. By this stage I was

inside our lounge room and leaning against the wall with each contraction. Dave was always nearby with the heat pack at the ready and helped me through each and every one.

By 5pm it was full on! Thank-goodness we had done some fantastic hypnobirthing sessions so I was able to 'ssssshhhhh' my way through the contractions and imagine each one as a wave crashing and subsiding. The pain was pretty intense at this point and the tears had started. I remember saying to Dave, "I don't think I can do this." Jacqui hadn't arrived and I could tell he was thinking, 'What do I do?' He remained incredibly calm and guided my breathing.

At 5.15pm I was mid-way through a contraction and screamed, "Where the f\*\*\* is Jacqui?" Michelle called her and she was stuck in Bledisloe Cup tra! c. Bloody football! She arrived not long after and it was like the whole room exhaled. Dave and Michelle began blowing up the pool when things started to get heavy and filled it up when Jacqui arrived. She asked me how I felt and then told me with the next contraction to try pushing. What a relief—I could actually start pushing my baby out!

I got into the pool shortly after, which was so incredibly soothing. The heaviness left and the warm water relaxed me. I don't remember much of the next stage except that I thought the whole suburb could hear my primal moans. When I watched my birth video I was absolutely amazed at the total calm between contractions. I watched the bag of waters pushing through and retracting and then the head crowning. What amazing bodies we have when left to our natural devices.

I was on my knees in the pool leaning over the side and holding onto Dave with each contraction. After a while Jacqui suggested I change position to open up my pelvis and help the baby down. After a few more contractions she said the head would come out with the next push. So I gave it my all and my baby came out all in one go. Jacqui caught him and put him straight into my arms. It was 7:38pm on Saturday 26th July 2008. Our little Leo had arrived!

I remember that moment as clear as day—my baby covered in vernix and birth juice. I glanced between his legs to see the most enormous set of balls! He was absolutely beautiful. I have two sisters and they both have two daughters each so to have a boy in the family was a surprise and a blessing. He had a little cry and then he was just so peaceful and so pink. Not the blue baby I had seen on all those DVDs! We stayed in the pool trying to



get Thomas attached to my breast and called our families to share the news.

I can't remember how much later the contractions started again as the placenta started to come away. I do remember saying, "Ripped off! You go through a whole labour and then you have to do it again!" I had been lying on my back in the pool for over an hour and felt the need to stand up to deliver the placenta so Michelle cut the cord and I passed Thomas to Dave for some skin-to-skin Daddy time. I got up on my hands and knees and finally delivered the placenta. Jacqui helped me out of the pool and onto the lounge to check me and Thomas.

There is a fantastic photo of me punching the air. I remember the most amazing feeling of euphoria; I felt like I could do ANYTHING! Someone should bottle that oxytocin! Michelle (or 'Earth Mother' as she became known after that day) got busy in the kitchen preparing dinner for everyone. All I wanted was a peanut butter and honey crumpet! My Mum came over because she couldn't wait until the morning and we all sat around chatting, eating, drinking and soaking up our new little man. I couldn't believe it was almost midnight by the time Jacqui helped us into bed. Dave and I just lay there staring incredulously at our beautiful boy. We finally fell into peaceful slumber—that was probably the last good nights sleep I have had!

I was recently in Canberra for the Homebirth Rally at Parliament House. To be surrounded by the amazing energy of those wonderful women and their families was something I will never

forget. May we find a peaceful resolution to the current situation for independent midwives so other women can experience the pure joy and magic of a home birth.

I would like to thank all those people who helped me have such a fantastic pregnancy and birth: my chiropractor Daniela Di Giacomo; my massage therapist Nicola Pagaimo; my 'Earth Mother' friend/naturopath/ energetic healer Michelle Mravunac; Jackie McFarlane for fabulous hypnobirthing sessions; Susan Ross from Birthright for extremely helpful prenatal sessions and advice along the way; Jan Roberts for inspiring me to have a homebirth and for sharing her knowledge and friendship; Robyn Dempsey for preparing our placenta medicines and all our friends and families for supporting our decision to birth at home.

Jacqui, I am ever so grateful for your guidance and support throughout my pregnancy. Thank you for respecting our choices and birth space and for helping me have such a wonderful birth. Most of all I would like to thank my husband and soul mate David for all the love and support during my pregnancy and labour and for being the most inspirational father to Thomas.



# Tasman's Birth Story

AUBREY WICKS

**My journey of birthing children began** in the United States. I had my two older boys, Owen and Ethan in a hospital. Their births went well with the standard Obstetrician and medical care. I went along with whatever the doctor told me and that was that. I had both of them naturally and drug-free. We moved to Australia in January 2006 and a couple of years later I became a doula, which opened my eyes to all the amazing possibilities.

My husband and I decided we were ready for a third child and it was a very exciting time for our family. We immediately decided to take charge of this birth and decided on a homebirth. My pregnancy was beautiful and my husband and children were involved every

step of the way.

On June 25th around 9:00pm, six days before my estimated due date, my husband Torin and I were watching television together when I felt a little gush of water. I was shocked because my previous labours hadn't started this way. I went to the bathroom to make sure but I was pretty confident this was it! I called my doula Susan Ross straight away and she said take it easy, rest, drink and see what happens. An hour and a half later my surges started and I was leaking more fluid. I called my midwife, Jane Palmer to let her know and that I would keep her posted. My labours usually only lasted about four to five hours so she knew to be ready. Torin was very calm and



let me do whatever I needed. I was so excited.

I stayed in the kitchen for the most part, stopping between surges and leaning on a chair, rocking back and forth. Torin kept the heat packs coming. Jane arrived about midnight and was a wonderful, peaceful presence in our home. Soon after Susan and our student midwife Melanie arrived. Everyone surrounded me with peace and support. Torin filled the pool and that brought great relief. Susan was a rockstar when it came to making sure I had a cold cloth on my head at all times.

Once in the pool, everything went calm. Torin kept rubbing my head, Susan and Jane drifted in and out and Melanie was knitting. It was very comforting that everyone was so calm. I was still getting surges but it was such a gift to have this rest before the real work began!

After a good 30-45 mins of this very quiet time, I was quickly reminded of being in labour! My urge to push was very strong and very real. In my previous labours at the hospital, they were constantly checking my

dilation and once I was at a 10cm, they told me to push even though I never once had the urge. Well I can now say, I know what it is like. It took over my entire body. We knew we would meet our little one very soon so I asked Torin to go and get the boys up as they had been sleeping up until that point. They eagerly woke up and knew right away what was going on. Our birth pool was positioned between two lounges and they both curled up together with great anticipation. I was making quite loud labouring noises, which startled my oldest, Owen. The wonderful thing was after each surge and push, I would stop and talk with my children letting them know I was okay and that the sounds I was making were helping the baby come.

They were the first to see the head appear and we were all so excited. Then came our beautiful baby. Torin reached down and caught him and handed him right to me. I felt immediately that it was a boy and I announced it right away. We were all shocked because we had been convinced it was a girl, but I instantly

was overjoyed that I had my three boys.

I held our new little baby for quite some time and just enjoyed the moment we had all just shared. Owen held his brother for about an hour while I birthed the placenta and got cleaned up. Tasman took my breast naturally, at his own pace, no nurses forcing him on and monitoring our every move. What a blessed experience!

By 6.00am, I was tucked into bed with my bundle and we all had a long sleep.

In closing my birth story of Tasman, I have to say, this birth experience was unbelievable and all that I could ever imagine. Of course all of my births were, but this one was something really special - in our home surrounded by love and my children, there is nothing like it. My midwives Jane and Melanie gave me just the space and respect that I needed which was fantastic. My doula Susan empowered me in so many ways, reminding me along the way that I was doing well.

Tasman Raymond Torin Wicks was born at 3:30am weighing 7.5 lbs.



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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 complement 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](mailto: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

### 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

March 19, 20, 21, 930 – 5pm

#### Byron Bay, NSW

Fully catered, non-residential \$550

### 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

### 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  
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### Moonsong

Oct 2, 3, 930 – 5pm

#### Julatten Retreat, Port Douglas, Qld

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meals and one treatment

### School of Shamanic Midwifery

#### Program 2, Opening Gathering

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#### Northern 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

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### Moonsong

November 27, 28, Saturday, Sunday, 930 – 5pm

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# BOOK review

REVIEWED BY LINDA HOLLO



## The Mask of Motherhood – How mothering changes everything and why we Pretend it doesn't.

BY SUSAN MAUSHART

**There are some books on my bookshelf related to birth,** motherhood and parenting which sprang out at me from the op shop shelves well before I became pregnant and birthed my little star just 7 months ago. This is the first book I have managed to finish since Astara was born and that is something to celebrate!

This book brings to light the experiences of women raising their children in the post-feminist era in a world where we have endless choices created by a complex social structure. Women are often forced to “juggle” their roles of caring for their children, working outside of the home and inside the home, all the while wearing a brave mask that tells a different story to the outside world compared with the experiences lived by most mothers - especially new mothers.

Why don't more women talk about their fears, failures, and feelings of being overwhelmed with the day to day experience of having the immense responsibility of looking after a new born baby?

Why don't more women share their truths about their birthing experiences whether they were blissful, painful or traumatic?

Why don't more women ask for support and an honest open ear when they need to share their frustrations, feelings of inadequacy, and inabilities of coping with their newfound roles.

Maushart cites scientific data, cultural studies and personal experience throughout her book as she delves into the world of pregnancy, labour, early motherhood, breastfeeding, working motherhood and effects on partner relationships to try and answer some of these questions and more. She opens the discussion around reasons why women minimise the challenges of motherhood. In a world that is driven by success, perfection, autonomy and self sufficiency, where the values of our culture “glorifies the ideal of motherhood, takes for granted the work of motherhood and ignores the experience of motherhood” may have some of the answers. This increases the need for many women to wear the mask of motherhood.

How do we as mothers perpetuate this wearing of the mask that says everything is “fine”? A common question asked by new mothers is “why didn't anyone tell me that it was going to be like this?” We are keeping ourselves and each other in the dark through our silence and our masks.

If more women openly shared with their sisters, friends and their mothers how they were feeling about everything from breastfeeding on demand to returning to paid work either full time or part time, child care decisions, relationship changes with their partners, then we could let the masks fall one by one. We may be more willing to share truths about the wild, wonderful learning experiences that motherhood presents us with and come to understand on an experiential level that

we are not alone. We can begin to celebrate this heroic quest, this journey into selfhood with ourselves and each other.

“The journey to motherhood is an odyssey of epic proportions, and every woman who undertakes it a heroine. Celebrating our role at the very core of humanity means learning to sing every line of that epic freely, the lamentations along with the hymns. When the Masks of Motherhood do crack through, they will have been eroded by tears that have been shed and shared, by the tremor of secrets unclasped, by the booming laughter of relief. What lies beneath the brave and brittle face of motherhood is a countenance of infinite expressiveness, a body of deepest knowing”. (*The Mask of Motherhood*)



# Ellis's Birth Story

PETRA TIMMERMANN

## My first birth experience was not how

I ever imagined having a child would be. My son was presenting breech, so I was booked in for an elective Caesarean with very little information or support about my options. Once I became pregnant with my second son, my focus was all about the VBAC I dreamed about. I read every book possible to prepare myself. In the end that worked out extremely well for us with a long but gentle natural birth in a birth centre.

However, one huge part of my labour I knew I didn't want to experience again was the transition from home to hospital. I felt like I had progressed really well at home and enjoyed the comforts and privacy of our own environment. The car ride was just awful and my labour had all but stopped by the time we arrived at the birth centre. It kicked off again relatively well once I was made comfortable in the birth suite – but not before having to labour for half an hour in the walk in cupboard while a previous birthing woman was moved from the birth room to her ward. I remember thinking about what it might have been like had I just stayed where I was...

Third time lucky. When I was pregnant with our third son I knew without a doubt that a homebirth was for us. I had since completed my doula training as I felt strongly about women having those options at their fingertips, so I felt a homebirth was the next logical step to complete the circle.



My husband studied with an ex-midwife turned doula, Julie Uren, who was happy to be with us for the birth and who put us in contact with our homebirth midwife Jacqui Wood. Steve and I clicked with Jacqui right away and once all was settled I had never felt more comfortable with my birth decision.

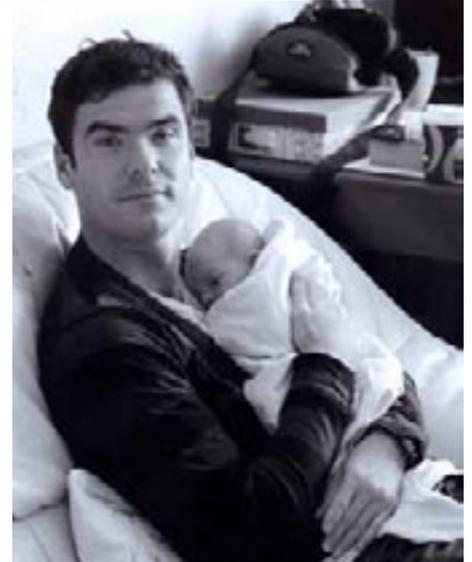
Jacqui was amazing and made me feel every bit capable and comfortable. No question was too ridiculous and everything was covered with all the support and information I needed. When it came to the birth itself, I barely knew she was there – just the security of knowing that capable hands were in the room if necessary.

My pregnancy flew by with two little ones to focus on and before we knew it we were discussing post date options with Jacqui. We still had a bit of time but I had fewer choices because of my previous c-section because I could not be induced. If I didn't start my labour naturally I would be sent straight to the operating theatre. That discussion was enough to get things moving and the next evening I noticed that the mild contractions I had been having over the past week were actually getting stronger. I was also starting to lose patience with the fully inflated birth pool in our lounge room being a constant reminder that things were imminent!

By 8pm I knew it was all happening so I called Jacqui and then baked the chocolate birthday cake I wanted to share with everyone once the baby arrived. Both Steve and I found it difficult to stay focused on anything now because we were simply waiting for things to intensify. The older boys were asleep so the house was very quiet – a little too quiet for the anticipation in the air, so we started a game of Scrabble to help keep our minds busy.

My sister, Tonya, had to be called to collect Oren and Leo after our inability to raise my parents on the phone who were out celebrating their wedding anniversary – they were supposed to be the ones on call! Tonya arrived about an hour later. We shared a cup of tea, mulling over the likelihood of this being a third little boy and laughing at my feeble attempts to create a word for Scrabble. By 10.00pm I had stopped chatting and spent most of my time 'in the zone' on the fit ball, so we were left alone after kissing our drowsy but excited boys goodnight.

The cake was iced at the last minute before I began pulling mattresses and cushions around the room, aiming for the perfect arrangement like a brooding cat while Steve called our doula, Julie. It was blissfully serene in the room with the silence of midnight surrounding us and



music softly playing in the background.

By now the contractions were demanding all my attention and I used the back of an armchair for support and to rest on in between. There was a time that I had found it remarkable that any woman would want to stand at such a physically taxing time but there I was, completely comfortable! Eventually I needed more, so I headed off for a shower while Julie called Jacqui to let her know where we were at and that we would need her presence soon. The hot water was such welcome relief. While in the shower I recall thinking how 'normal' it felt being at home and not having to concern ourselves with packing up and going elsewhere. It was really comforting. So my next thought was to fill the birth pool. As everything had been flowing so smoothly, no one had remembered the birth pool so I directed that it needed filling – now! While Steve got to work with that, Julie applied very well placed heat packs on my lower belly. I had no concept of how quickly time was passing.

Jacqui arrived at 12.30am to an almost ready birth pool and a very ready (to birth) woman. There was a short time when we thought the pool wouldn't be ready in time for the birth itself, but after a few kettle top ups it was done. I was in the water as soon as possible and found a comfortable position immediately. Contractions intensified very quickly from here and as my waters had not broken the pressure was insane. I reached a point when I started to feel like I was out of control and not coping well when it occurred to me that it was a sign that I was almost there. Almost immediately my waters broke with such force but the relief was fleeting as I began to push within the same contraction. I quickly lay down in the pool realizing that this was the moment we would meet our baby.

I breathed him out no more than ten

minutes later. I reached down and touched his beautiful soft head after Jacqui swiftly and gently removed the umbilical cord that was around his neck. On the next breath his arms were free and I leaned forward to pull him towards me with the following push. At 2.00am he was here and he was beautiful. Jacqui used tactile stimulation to get Ellis breathing as he should and we stayed cuddling in the water for as long as the water was warm enough.

Once the placenta had been birthed and breastfeeding established we all sat around sharing birthday cake and a cup of tea. It wasn't until 4 am that we headed to bed. Steve slept immediately but I was still lying there staring at our new son sleeping until well past 5.00am.

Oren and Leo met Ellis later that morning and spent the day cuddling and staring in awe at their new brother. It was amazing waking up and feeling like it was just another day aside from the miracle the night before had witnessed, and that there was this new little person who had joined us... and Oren was pretty excited to have his first



day off school ever!

Julie, Jacqui and Steve were all amazing. It was like giving birth on my own with complete control yet with the security of such great support when I needed reassurance.

I would (almost) do it again just to experience another homebirth with our fabulous midwife and doula team!



Prenatal Yoga at Home  
DVD  
with Tara Darlington  
[www.BirthWithDignity.com](http://www.BirthWithDignity.com)

Breathing  
Yoga  
Relaxation  
for pregnancy & birth



# SYDNEY PREGNANCY CENTRE

*Support. Information. Choice.*

Sydney Pregnancy Centre offers support and education to enrich your pregnancy, birth and early parenting experiences.

We are committed to providing evidence based information and friendly mother to mother support helping couples feel calm and confident through this special time.

Our services, information sessions, courses and classes include:

- ➔ Pre Natal Yoga
- ➔ Birth preparation workshops
- ➔ Birth choices advice sessions
- ➔ Calmbirth®
- ➔ VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Caesarean)
- ➔ Doula Support and Registry
- ➔ Parenting seminars and workshops.

For more information on the products, services, workshops and courses offered by and through the Sydney Pregnancy Centre please email [info@sydneypregnancycentre.com](mailto:info@sydneypregnancycentre.com) or visit [www.sydneypregnancycentre.com](http://www.sydneypregnancycentre.com)

# HAS in the Community

## My Body, My Baby, MY RIGHT TO DECIDE Rally February 18th

On the 18th February, hundreds of women, babies and children came together across Australia at 13 simultaneous rallies to protest against the government's planned overhaul of maternity care.

NSW Greens MP Lee Rhiannon told a crowd of about 100 in Sydney that access to a homebirth was a woman's right.

"We are in an extraordinary situation when a woman can choose to have a caesarean but she can't choose to have her children at home," Ms Rhiannon said outside the office of the federal Minister for the Status of Women, Tanya Plibersek.

Homebirth Access Sydney membership co-ordinator Virginia Maddock gave a speech on the day that is reproduced at right.



My name is Virginia Maddock and I am a mother, a doula and volunteer for Homebirth Access Sydney. As a doula, I know first hand how women can be treated in the hospital system, and I have seen things, which have made me very uncomfortable and against evidence based practice such as women trying for a VBAC coerced into having an induction, which is risky and contraindicated. I have seen changes of shifts when a midwife with a very different philosophy of birth comes in half way through a woman's labour, which can have a dramatic effect on how the birth goes. And I've heard stories of women coerced into unnecessary medical interventions because they did not dilate fast enough, despite them and their babies being happy and without stress.



So when I got pregnant, there was no question in my mind that I was going to have a homebirth with a private midwife attend to my needs in the comfort and privacy of my own home. Throughout my pregnancy I had the gold standard continuity of care. Each of my antenatal appointments lasted between 1 and 2 hrs in my home over a cuppa. I didn't have to wait in a hospital waiting room for an hour, only to be seen by an obstetrician for 15 minutes.

The relationship with my midwife was special and intimate, and she demonstrated time and again her trust in my baby and my body to birth naturally, when I chose to not have any ultrasound scans, when I went 13 days overdue with my baby who was unengaged and posterior, and when it took 3 hours to push my baby out in 2nd stage. If I had been in hospital and under the control of an obstetrician, there is no doubt in my mind that I would have been induced, and if this didn't lead to a c-section, I'd have been given an episiotomy, with my baby extracted from me by forceps or vacuum.

If this proposed legislation goes ahead with the amendments pushed for by the AMA, women will have more rights to abort their babies than birth where and with whom they choose, women will not have the choice that I did to birth at home, they will not have the choice to have no ultrasound scans, they will not have the choice to have a natural birth after a previous caesarean, or a breech birth, or labour without being hooked up to monitoring machines, or be allowed to go overdue more than 10 days, they will be forced to have an obstetrician who has probably never seen a natural labour from start to finish, make decisions which are not based on evidence but on fear and convenience for him/her.

In 1891 the Australian Labour Party was formed and in 1894 women won the right to vote. Now 116 years later, women again need to stand up for their rights to self-determination. We need to fight this Labour government and we need to fight the AMA who is behind this legislation, because they want to control women's bodies! And we need Tanya Plibersek, the Minister for the Status of Women to hear our united voice and represent our choice!

But this is not only a women's rights issue, this is a human rights issue.

## Secretary's Report

GRETA WERNER

Our events team has been busy organising the next biannual Birth Choices Expo on the 5th March. The last few of these events have been very successful, and they are still growing! It was decided to discontinue the Natural Birth Information evenings and focus on the Expo instead, as the Expo has been a much more successful format.

- A new website has been created focusing on the Birth Choices Expo. It is at [www.birthchoicesexpo.com.au](http://www.birthchoicesexpo.com.au)
- The annual HAS picnic was postponed due to rain, and will be held on the 14th March.
- At the AGM on the 26th February the following committee positions will be voted on:

HAS coordinator	Merchandising coordinator
Assistant coordinator	Information officer
Treasurer	Library coordinator
Secretary	Fund-raising / Sponsorship coordinator
Birthings editor	Volunteers coordinator
Website/advertising coordinator	Media Watch
Events team	
Memberships coordinator	

Many of these positions will be filled on the day, but some may remain vacant. Unfilled positions will be broken down into smaller tasks, to make it more appealing for volunteers. Committee meetings are good fun, and if any members are thinking of coming along, please do! It's a great time to be involved, as there are huge upheavals in the health system and there is a lot going on that impacts on homebirth families directly.

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 consumer's choice. HAS is continuing to perform a huge lobbying effort to help women access the best maternity care.

## Roundup of 2009 Committee Events and Activities

### This is summary of committee activity that was prepared

by Greta Werner, Secretary for our AGM and and is an impressive illustration of what a bunch of volunteers can coordinate, organise, participate in and commit to! Particularly when so many of these volunteers have little ones in toe!

This year our members participated in programs at the Silas Clinical Skills Centre at UNSW. It was an opportunity for medical students to ask questions and gain 'clinical experience'. Our members had the opportunity to talk to students about our experience of homebirth.

HAS organised a stand at the Parents and Baby Expo on the 16th & 17th May 2009. Midwives and Doulas were also invited to take part. There were DVD's shown (Siblings at birth, Art of Birth) and a laptop was showcasing the new website. Info packs were made available about doulas, midwife contact lists and calmbirth. Maternity coalition postcards were handed out. Birthings magazines and books were for sale. Some new A1 sized banners were produced for the show.

The HAS website was updated this year, with a more streamlined look and better functionality. It has an online payment facility, so membership and HAS merchandise can now be paid for on line.

HAS organised a very successful Birth Choices Expo on Friday 30th October, with marketing help from Blue Dakini Productions. There were so many exhibitors that some had to be turned away. It was decided that this event will now be biannual, in order to streamline the marketing and promotion aspect. Leichardt Town Hall has been booked for a larger expo on 5th March 2010.

The natural birth seminars were not very popular. It was decided that the HAS events team will focus their efforts on the Birth Choices Expo instead.

HAS has been heavily involved in lobbying the state and federal government. HAS and our members have made submissions to senate inquiries, met with federal and state members of parliament and with ministers and/or their advisers.

HAS supported and participated in rallies, including one held in Canberra on 7th September 2009 and two held in Sydney in front of Tania Plibersek's office.

The quarterly HAS magazine Birthings has been going strong. Sarah McLean took over as editor from Alison Leemen and Danni Townsend. Virginia Maddock will take over from Sarah after the next issue.

Due to all flurry of activity in 2009 we have a number of volunteers step down or move into other roles, so we need you!! If you are interested in joining the committee we would love to have you. Any of these jobs can be what you make it. They can be as big or as small as you can manage. Specifically we are looking for:

- Fundraising/Sponsorship Co-ordinator
- Volunteers Co-ordinator

Please contact [info@homebirthsydney.org.au](mailto:info@homebirthsydney.org.au) if you are interested in helping out!

**Body Casting Sydney**  
**Pregnancy sculptures by commission**

"I never want to forget the amazing experience of my baby growing within me."



[www.BodyCastingSydney.com.au](http://www.BodyCastingSydney.com.au)

## Committee Member Profile



**HAS MEMBER -  
GRETA WERNER**  
(Treasurer and Secretary)

**Joined...** in 2004 when my son Kurtis was on the way. I was joined up by my midwife and didn't really know much about HAS, or that Birthings magazine was produced by HAS. Jo Tilly and I tried to set up an inner west 'Birth Choices' group, but we didn't get a huge amount of interest. After about 2 years I let my membership lapse, as I was really busy with my business.

**Family** Partner Paul, daughter Ruby (10), son Kurtis (4) and baby daughter Sophia (6 months).

**Life prior to birthing** I studied architecture and design, and combined this with my passion for raising environmental awareness by establishing and running a sustainable kitchen and furniture design business for 5 years. I was Treasurer of the Society for Responsible Design for 3 years.

**Life with a family** It's busy! While sometimes I get tired and annoyed

when there are up to 4 people shouting for my attention at once, I am also making the most of it. I have given up my kitchen design business, and am enjoying just doing stuff with and for the family (well, and friends, and HAS...) I can see that there will be a time when I will want to expand my horizons again and work outside the home, but I am quite happy spending time with the kids while they are young. They won't be young twice, will they. It's amazing how quickly they grow up actually.

**Why home birth?** A few of my friends had had home births, but when I was pregnant with Ruby I was living with my parents, and it didn't occur to me to have her at their place. In hind sight I wish that I had. Both Kurtis and Sophia were born at home, and the care I received from my private midwife, my partner and my friend Zoe was truly amazing! It really made all the difference! I am outraged that the Government is trying to make it harder for people to access home birth services. After having experienced both hospital and home birth, I believe that a home birth is far more enjoyable for a mother, and leads to much better outcomes. There is scientific evidence to support this. I wish the health minister would spend the time to consider this evidence instead of bowing to pressure from organisations who do not have the health consumer's best interest as their main objective.



where your birth belongs to you  
[www.birthright.com.au](http://www.birthright.com.au)



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where your birth belongs to you

# Media Watch

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

## 12 January 2010

*Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) ran an article titled Home Birth program that Delivers in regards to the St George Hospital Home birth program. A study of the first 100 women booked to use the service found 63 per cent successfully delivered at home with no intervention or pain relief and minimal vaginal tearing. The program, launched in 2005, was helping to improve home birth's poor public image, but was still too restrictive for most women, and had abandoned some in the late stages of their pregnancies. Claire Mannion who recently gave birth to son Bailey through the program stated, "After having a hospital birth for my first child, [Bailey's birth] was very, very different and it was amazing to be told that everything was my choice, my decision. It was unbelievably calm and relaxed."*

## 7 January 2010

*SMH ran an article titled Govt urged to tighten Homebirth Laws after a new study which compared South Australian births between 1991 and 2006 found the perinatal mortality rates of homebirth and hospital births to be similar. However, babies were seven times more likely to*

*die from complications during a homebirth than a planned hospital and also 27 times more likely to suffer asphyxiation during labour, according to the study published in the latest Medical Journal of Australia.*

## 18 January 2010

**The Australian ran a similar article titled Home Births multiply death risk by seven**

*That is the finding of a study conducted by Marc Keirse of Flinders University and his co-authors, who examined data on almost 300,000 births in South Australia between*

*1991 and 2006. The AMA is backing the federal government's proposed overhaul of home birthing laws, which will require all midwives to be insured and join a national register. Homebirth Australia secretary Justine Caines said the AMA was threatened by homebirth, because it was outside the medical establishment's control. Professor Keirse said the home births regime needed a stronger safety net. "Prohibition doesn't work. It would just make it less safe than it already is," Professor Keirse said. "But what we should do is have a larger safety net to make sure people are doing it properly."*

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**Fertility, Pregnancy, Birth  
& Children's Health**

**Louisa Glindemann  
0412 885 530**

**[www.yournaturopath.com.au](http://www.yournaturopath.com.au)**

## HAS ANNUAL PICNIC SUNDAY 14TH MARCH 2010

**11am - 2pm Jubilee Park, Glebe.**

Meet at the corner of Eglinton & 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**

## PRE-NATAL SERVICES

## CITY &amp; EAST

**Red Tent Health Centre**

Naomi Abeshouse – Acupuncture, Chinese herbs & Doula  
Rebecca Mar Young – Acupuncture & Chinese herbs  
We specialize in gynaecology & obstetrics and have supported many women through conception, pregnancy, birth and post-natally. We gently and effectively treat many symptoms such as morning sickness, back and pelvic pain as well as preparing your body for birth and turning breech babies. We run workshops to teach you and your partner how to effectively use acupressure during labour. See our website for details.

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

## SYDNEY WIDE

**Jutta Doula College**

Please see our listing under Birth Support Services: Doulas.

**Miscarriage & Stillbirth Support Groups**

Though one in four women suffer miscarriage, most are left feeling alone with their loss. The natural grieving process is seriously hindered by lack of appropriate support. We are attempting to remedy this by providing an opportunity for women who have suffered a loss of pregnancy to engage in an intimate support group. This group is facilitated by psychotherapist and social worker, Genevieve David, and supported by obstetric acupuncturist and doula, Naomi Abeshouse, who hold a safe and nurturing space for women to come to understand and share their loss. This not-for-profit program will be run in two-hour sessions over 8 weeks. We will be holding a free introductory evening very soon, so please contact us for details. Medicare rebates available with GP referral.

**Genevieve David 0408 213 030**  
**genevivedavid@redtent.com.au**  
**Naomi Abeshouse 0413 690 861**  
**naomi@redtent.com.au**  
**www.redtent.com.au**

## INNER WEST

**Jutta Wohlrab**

– Hypnobirthing classes: in Newtown & Glebe  
Private classes are held in the comfort of your home as well as for groups in the inner west. Please join Jutta, a midwife with 26 years of midwifery experience, a UK trained hypnotherapist and certified Hypnobirth practitioner, for her classes.  
– Babymassage: Wednesdays at 10am, at Samadhi Yoga, Newtown  
– Yoga in the pregnancy and postnatal period: from January in St Peters, Glebe

and Camperdown (groups and private classes)

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**

**Erika Elliott**

calmbirth® classes  
Prepare for your amazing labour and birth experience the calmbirth® way. Learn, from a seasoned doula and childbirth educator, ways to release fear and tension so you can sit in your feminine power and birth your baby with confidence & grace and remain connected to the experience. Once completed, you will trust your body, trust your baby & trust birth. Private classes held in your home or in small groups in Lilyfield/Rozelle.

**Erika Elliott - MotherBirth –**  
**Birth the way nature intended**  
**0425 217 788**

## 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:**  
**93864243 0415304369**  
**counsellor@doula.net.au**  
**www.rebeccagouldhurst.net.au**

**NORTH SYDNEY AND NORTHERN BEACHES****All about Birth**

—calmbirth®  
calmbirth® is a two day preparation for birth course that is suitable for those planning a homebirth, water birth, active and natural birth. calmbirth® aims that birth is a normal physiological process, and you will learn skills to use during pregnancy, birth and beyond. Contact Louise for more details and course dates  
**Half day birth and parenting program**  
A comprehensive course that provides positive information and discussion on labour and birth.

**Louise Luscri: 0808 231 759**  
**info@allaboutbirth.com.au**

**www.allaboutbirth.com.au**

## ANNANDALE/INNER WEST

**Birthsense**

—Hypnosis for birth  
Personal and creative birth education, counselling and body centred hypnosis for a positive pregnancy, birth and bonding. Weekend workshops, women's groups also.

**Jackie McFarlane 9566 1035**  
**jackchip@optusnet.com.au**

**Jutta Wohlrab**

Holistic care for pregnancy, birth and beyond with over 25 years of holistic midwifery in Germany. I love to offer you a great range of treatments through all aspects of your pregnancy.  
– Certified Hypnobirth Practitioner (Mongan Method)  
– Certified Hypnotist and Hypnotherapist  
– Midwifery training in Acupuncture, Acupressure and Homeopathie  
– Babymassage  
– Metamorphic Footmassage  
– Individual home visits whenever wanted and needed

**Jutta Wohlrab 0431 201 877**  
**joemidwife@hotmail.com**

## 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

**Pregnancy Workshops**

Midwife Jane Hardwicke Collings gives regular workshops—"Pregnancy The Inner Journey"—in the Southern Highlands and in other places by arrangement.  
Also starting in Spring 2009  
"The School of Shamanic Midwifery"—a women's mysteries school for doulas and midwives

**Jane Hardwicke Collings:**  
**48882002 0408035808**  
**janecollings@bigpond.com**  
**www.moonsong.com.au**  
**www.placentalremedy.com**

## SUTHERLAND/ST GEORGE

**Calmbirth® preparation course**

The calmbirth® course is an amazing course, it imparts the knowledge of birth preparation techniques such as deep relaxation, visualisation, breathing, positive imagery, attitudes/expectancy to achieve a rewarding, easier, more comfortable stress-free birthing experience. Many women who have done the calmbirth® course during their pregnancy are far more likely to have positive feelings about their birthing experience. Their partners and

midwives are quite often very impressed with how beautifully they've worked with their body during the labour. For enquiries of dates and available times and bookings phone 9544 6441 available weekends, weekdays, evenings.  
Visit: [www.julieclarke.com.au](http://www.julieclarke.com.au) see website for dates and discount. Special note: Julie's calmbirth® course is very reasonably priced.

**Julie Clarke**  
**julie@julieclarke.com.au**  
**0401265530 9544 6441. 9 Withybrook Pl. Sylvania (20 mins south of airport).**

**Natural Beginnings**

—Herbal Medicine, Nutrition & Birth Support

I have a very personal interest in treating preconception, pregnancy and children's health, naturally.  
With some help from herbs and nutrition, my partner and I prepared our bodies' health naturally for a conscious conception, and I enjoyed a trouble free pregnancy, and gave birth at home to a healthy, full term baby who continues to have perfect health.

You too can benefit from my experience in natural health care. I can assist you with:  
~ preconception health and natural fertility

~ preparing for a healthier baby  
~ overcoming health conditions, (including during pregnancy)  
~ preparing your body and mind for a better birth  
~ birth support for mum & dad, and/or siblings  
~ treating your children's health naturally  
~ chemical-free home-made herbal skin products

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**

**Transition into Parenthood**

Childbirth and Parenting Preparation  
Wonderful, comprehensive courses focused on natural active birth including waterbirth, including practicalities of baby care. Participants receive professionally presented well organised course notes. Very suitable for homebirth, birth centre and delivery suite.

See Julie's website for more details, birth stories and pictures, information [www.julieclarke.com.au](http://www.julieclarke.com.au)  
Julie has a great sense of humour and a very gentle approach, she is supportive and flexible in her teaching approach. Good variety of courses to choose from: 6 wk course 1 night per week or 2 Saturdays condensed or 1 Sunday super condensed. Reasonably priced and discount available.  
**Julie Clarke julie@julieclarke.com.au**  
**0401265530 9544 6441. 9 Withybrook Pl. Sylvania (20 mins south of airport).**

## HOME BIRTH SUPPORT GROUPS

### SYDNEY (HAS)

#### Sutherland Shire and St George Homebirth Group

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

### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### Birth Central (Far south coast)

Cindy (02) 6494 0131  
www.birthcentral.org.au

#### Blue Mountains Homebirth Support

Gatherings fortnightly on a Tuesday at 10am.

Natalie Dash (02) 4757 2080  
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

### Mothers and Midwives of the South (Southern Highlands)

Jane Collings  
(02) 4888 2002 or 0408 035 808  
*We meet every month in the Illawarra area.* Contact Jaia on 0431 709978 or jaia\_shanti@yahoo.com.au for more details. Everyone welcome.

### 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

## BIRTH SUPPORT SERVICES DOULAS

### HORNSBY/HILLS DISTRICT/ NORTH SHORE/NORTHERN BEACHES

#### Jacqui James

I am passionate about supporting & encouraging families during pregnancy, labour, birth and in the early "daze". I work with both parents and assist in creating a nurturing environment for the baby to be born. The birth of a baby is a sacred experience and I feel honoured to be a part of it. I also facilitate mother/family blessing ceremonies.

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

**Mob: 0418 445 653**  
[jacquij@people.net.au](mailto: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.

**For appointments: 9977 7888 or other enquiries: 0423 171 191**  
**15 South Steyne, Manly**  
[heather@birthingspirit.com.au](mailto:heather@birthingspirit.com.au)  
[www.birthingspirit.com.au](http://www.birthingspirit.com.au)

### SOUTHERN SUBURBS

#### Natural Beginnings

Holsitic healing and Doula service  
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
- *Kindred*

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](http://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](mailto:moreinfo@australiandoulacollege.com.au)  
[www.australiandoulacollege.com.au](http://www.australiandoulacollege.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 Helena to collect the books from Greenwich. 0424 096 546 or [events@homebirthsydney.org.au](mailto:events@homebirthsydney.org.au)

**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**

**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)

**midwiferobyn@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**

**Homebirth: a natural choice**

I take a holistic 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 to Sydney;**  
**Woolongong to Nowra**  
**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**

**Sydney, Central Coast, Southern Highlands, Blue Mountains and Illawara.**

**Sonja MacGregor**

A holistic 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.birthatome.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**

**Elements of Birth**

**Jutta Wohlrab**

**Inner West**

**Phone: 0431 201 877**

**Email: elementsofbirth@hotmail.com**

**www.elementsofbirth.com.au**

**Jo Hunter: Homebirth Midwife**

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

**Blue Mountains, Inner west and Western Sydney**

**Phone: (02) 47519840**

**Email: jophil@aapt.net.au**

## Homebirth Access Sydney (Inc)

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

## HAS Policy Statement

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

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

MAGAZINE ADVERTISING RATES		
	Single (1 Issue)	Annual (4 issues)
<b>Service Pages</b>		
Doula Listing	n/a	\$25
Services Listing	n/a	\$35
<b>Colour Advertisements</b>		
Business Card Display	\$20	\$70
Quarter Page Display	\$30	\$110
Half Page Display	\$40	\$150
Full Page Display	\$65	\$250
<b>Coming soon: ONLINE ADVERTISING</b>		
For details, please email <a href="mailto:advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au">advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au</a>		

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  
Contact Jo on 95198524 to find out location of monthly meetings as they may change

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:** Virginia Maddock 9501 0863

**Next meetings: 26 March, 30 April & 28 May**

### 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!

March		May	
<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group.</b> 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 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group.</b> 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 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
<b>Fri 5</b>	<b>Birth Choices Expo: 6-9pm Leichhardt Town hall guest speaker Peter Jackson founder of Calmbirth®.</b> Introduction on creating a calmer birth environment. Visit <a href="http://www.homebirthsydney.org.au">www.homebirthsydney.org.au</a> or see us on facebook for more info. For exhibitor & advertising opportunities, plus if you would like to volunteer to help, please contact <a href="mailto:events@homebirthsydney.org.au">events@homebirthsydney.org.au</a>	<b>Thurs 6</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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
<b>Thurs 11</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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	<b>Thurs 20</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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
<b>Thurs 25</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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	<b>Thurs 6</b>	<b>Illawarra Birth Choices Group.</b> 7.30pm - Screening of <i>A Breech in the System</i> . Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <a href="http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html">www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html</a>
<b>Mon 15</b>	<b>Illawarra Birth Choices Group.</b> 10.30am to 12.30pm - Topic - Post Natal Depression. Guest speaker Melinda McKeown counsellor. Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale. Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <a href="http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html">www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html</a>	<b>Mon 17</b>	<b>Illawarra Birth Choices Group.</b> 10.30am to 12.30pm - Topic - Dru Yoga as a valuable tool during pregnancy and Post natal. Guest speaker Erika Steller, Dru Yoga teacher, will present and demonstrate. Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale. Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <a href="http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html">www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html</a>
<b>Thurs 18</b>	<b>Pregnancy &amp; Parenting Network meeting.</b> Theme: 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 <a href="mailto:jane@pregnancy.com.au">jane@pregnancy.com.au</a> . Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.	<b>Thurs 20</b>	<b>Pregnancy &amp; Parenting Network meeting.</b> Theme: Pregnancy Experiences, 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 <a href="mailto:jane@pregnancy.com.au">jane@pregnancy.com.au</a> . Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.
<b>Fri 26</b>	<b>HAS Committee meeting.</b> 10am-12pm: contact Virginia 9501 0863 to find out location of monthly meetings as they may change. All welcome	<b>Fri 28</b>	<b>HAS Committee meeting.</b> 10am-12pm: contact Virginia 9501 0863 to find out location of monthly meetings as they may change. All welcome.
April		June	
<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group.</b> 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 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Sutherland Shire and St. George Homebirth Group.</b> 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 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
<b>Thurs 2</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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	<b>Thurs 3</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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
<b>Thurs 25</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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	<b>Thurs 17</b>	<b>Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group.</b> 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
<b>Mon 12</b>	<b>Illawarra Birth Choices Group.</b> 10.30am to 12.30pm - Topic - Post Natal Depression. Guest speaker Dr. Verena Raschke-Cheema. Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale. Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <a href="http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html">www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html</a>	<b>Mon 14</b>	<b>Illawarra Birth Choices Group.</b> 10.30am to 12.30pm - Topic - TBC. Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale. Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <a href="http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html">www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html</a>
<b>Thurs 22</b>	<b>Pregnancy &amp; Parenting Network meeting.</b> Theme: Birth stories, 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 <a href="mailto:jane@pregnancy.com.au">jane@pregnancy.com.au</a> . Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.	<b>Thurs 17</b>	<b>Pregnancy &amp; Parenting Network meeting.</b> Theme: Waterbirth, 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 <a href="mailto:jane@pregnancy.com.au">jane@pregnancy.com.au</a> . Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.
<b>Fri 30</b>	<b>HAS Committee meeting.</b> 10am-12pm: contact Virginia 9501 0863 to find out location of monthly meetings as they may change. All welcome.	<b>Fri 25</b>	<b>HAS Committee meeting.</b> 10am-12pm: contact Virginia 9501 0863 to find out location of monthly meetings as they may change. All welcome.

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

The topic for the next issue is

# Homebirth as Healer



Submissions are welcomed on your own personal experience of how homebirth healed old wounds or negative birth experiences or trauma.

**Reminder** Update your membership details by email at [member@homebirthsydney.org.au](mailto: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 by 1st May 2010

EMAIL THE EDITORS AT [EDITOR@HOMEBIRTHSYDNEY.ORG.AU](mailto:EDITOR@HOMEBIRTHSYDNEY.ORG.AU)