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Leave home births alone

ON the one hand, we are constantly reminded of the alarming stress on our hospital services and health care system. On the other, there is a move afoot to strangle home birth. It hardly makes sense.

From a purely financial point of view, it makes sense to support home birth, at a fraction of the cost of a hospital birth.

Home birth is not just about where to have your baby. It is part of the move towards personal and community responsibility for health. It emphasises education and knowledge, not naive dependence on the hospital system.

Most women will continue to give birth in hospitals, but a growing number choose birth at home. The excellent standard of health care they currently receive must be supported, not attacked, if we are genuinely concerned with improving medical health services in this country.

ALISON JONES
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HAVING had two so-called "safe" hospital births (which with hindsight I realise were anything but safe), I decided to have my third baby at home. This experience was a real awakening for me to nature's miracle of birth.

I feel deeply saddened that this exquisite, joyous, safe occasion is being denied women because the Board of Health's maternity services committee says hospital is safer.

What rot! Home birth statistics are excellent. Where are current hospital statistics?

I feel the committee has no reasons to say home birth is unsafe for women who are physically, mentally, and emotionally fit and wanting to give birth in their own homes.

The poor wages paid to home birth midwives (they could earn more working in Woolies), and now these restrictive recommendations, discriminate against a group of people who can think and feel for themselves.

There were nearly 700 people killed on our roads last year — let the Board of Health and maternity services committee ban the car! It would be far more constructive than harassing a dedicated, loyal and loving group of men and women, the home birth midwives and doctors who are trying to continue to do the excellent work they have done over the past few years.

ANN IRELAND

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