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MEDIA RELEASE

Re: WA AMA President labels women selfish for choosing homebirth

The WA Australian Medical Association (AMA) President, Michael Gannon, recently stated that women choosing homebirths are “risking their babies’ lives. It really is a selfish decision.”

Leah Hardiman, President of Maternity Choices Australia, called on AMA “to maintain a focus on compassionate care and to step away from seeing a doctor as the moral guardian of birth. It is not Michael Gannon’s place to make a moral judgement of a woman choosing to birth her baby at home.”

AMA’s own position statement, ‘Maternal Decision-Making – 2013’, reflects a modern understanding between the clinician and a woman. Using generalisations with regards to clinical circumstances is unhelpful for women during their decision making process.

Health care professionals are required to provide women with good advice about their birth options, based upon current evidence and guidelines. There have been international studies, most recently, the NICE guidelines (2014), to support the notion that homebirth is the optimal choice for some women.

Leah Hardiman states, “We are well past the time where it is acceptable for Michael Gannon to give moral advice to his clients.”

Maternity Choices Australia welcomes the opportunity to consult with the AMA and would appreciate the prospect of discussing the reasons women are choosing to birth their children at home - sometimes against the advice of their doctor.

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