



Mums want one-to-one birth care

Local birth service campaigners told to pursue a state-wide network

WHEN Muswellbrook mother Casey Wright had her child at Muswellbrook District Hospital, she couldn't have a bath to ease her pain, faced confusion about whether she was having contractions, and had a number of different midwives throughout the pregnancy and birth.

For her, having one midwife would have made the process easier to deal with.

She said she didn't feel comfortable during the pregnancy, birth and post-natal period because she felt the midwives were strangers.

"I would have liked to have the one midwife who knew exactly what I wanted and could explain things to me in a trusting way," Mrs Wright explained.

Upper Hunter mothers calling for improved maternity services have been told to extend their network across the state if they want to make a real difference.

Representatives from Upper Hunter Birth Choice, based largely in Muswellbrook, met with state Member for the Upper Hunter, George Souris, on Tuesday.

The group presented Mr Souris with a petition of support for a local midwifery service.

The group believe a midwifery clinic like ones in Belmont and Ryde would

help ease the burden of local general practitioners as well as giving expectant mothers one-to-one care through the pregnancy and birth.

Mr Souris said he would lodge the petition in NSW Parliament and suggested the group, a subsidiary of the Maternity Coalition, contact other supporters around the state to do the same thing.

"If other people in the same position do the same with their MPs the message in Parliament will be much louder," Mr Souris said.

"The fact is we are short of doctors in general, but particularly obstetricians. When we have a good source of midwives who can provide a personal relationship with up to 70 per cent of births, these women need to be encouraged."

Upper Hunter Birth Choice's Shari Bonnette said midwives are trained to care for women with healthy pregnancies.

"But currently local midwives are not working as they were trained. Our current maternity service is not working effectively. It needs to change."

The petition to support midwife-modelled maternity services can be signed at Muswellbrook Book Cellar, Chemistworks and the Total Health and Education Centre.



CAMPAGNING: Justine Caines, Toni McCallum, MP George Souris and Shari Bonnette.