

# TRANSCRIPT

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into perinatal services

Bendigo — 24 October 2017

#### Members

Mr Paul Edbrooke — Chair

Ms Cindy McLeish — Deputy Chair

Ms Roma Britnell

Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins

Ms Chris Couzens

Ms Maree Edwards

Mr Bernie Finn

#### Witness

Ms Elizabeth Murphy, Bendigo Positive Birthing.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — Could you please state your full name for the record?

**Ms MURPHY** — I am Elizabeth Therese Murphy, and I am talking now about Bendigo Positive Birthing. I was not quite prepared for this, so I am just basically going to read from their website, which gives information about what the service does. It is a voluntary group that came together in 2013.

Bendigo Positive Birthing began with a group of midwives, doulas, health practitioners, artists, educators, and women passionate about birth coming together to discuss positive birthing in our community. The passion and inspiration shared among these women inspired a motivation to join together and share their wisdom, knowledge and stories with others on their birthing journeys.

A positive birth experience is not reliant upon location, nor whether you birthed your baby with or without intervention, a natural physiological birth or through caesarean. Each woman is different, each woman will have a different picture of what she believes is a positive birth, and sometimes nature throws a wildcard and we have to make the experience as positive as possible. If each woman has the opportunity to choose where she births, how she births, and ...

who supports her she —

is already on the path to a positive birthing experience.

This journey begins in pregnancy when a woman surrounds herself with positive women and birth journeys, she approaches her birth with an open mind, finding different sources of information, questioning uncertainty, and enhancing her knowledge base to make informed decisions.

What is a positive birth? A positive birth is a woman feeling empowered by her birthing experience, a sense of pride and achievement. She feels content within herself that she has given her baby the birth and beginning in life that complements the pregnancy journey she has passed and inspires the parenting journey she begins.

This is where Bendigo Positive Birthing began, a belief that each woman deserves and is entitled to a positive birthing experience. We want to motivate and inspire women (and their families) to experience a positive pregnancy, birthing and early parenting journey. Through our information evenings, local knowledge base, and resources within the community we hope to inspire a positive birthing culture within the Greater Bendigo community.

That is just from our website, and we have a Facebook page. It is all voluntary. We have a series of three information evenings that happen in March, July and November each year, and then we have also had some guest speakers who have come up to do particular things. Occasionally we have had movie nights that are to do with birthing things. Now people from our audience come back and tell their birthing stories — we always have one of those in our sessions — and just give people information so that they approach their birth with more knowledge and a positive attitude. That is what Bendigo Positive Birthing does.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — Thank you. I would like to now close the proceedings today. Thank you very much to the community members and the professional bodies who spoke to us today. It was greatly appreciated. Thanks as always to Hansard getting all of this down and to our secretariat staff for supporting us today.

**Committee adjourned.**