

## **DRUG ADDICTED MOTHERS**

**Babies born with drug addictions that require treatment are given small doses of methadone and buprenorphine.**

**Over half of addicted babies exposed to buprenorphine and 80 per cent of babies exposed to methadone have needed treatment for withdrawal.**

**Only a limited number of hospitals are prepared to deliver babies in the USA due to complications for the newborns.**

**Very few options are available for drug addicted mothers for birthing.**

**Drug withdrawal symptoms for the babies do not set in immediately and newborns are kept in hospital to deal with the problems.**

**(Source: Drug Watch International 11 April 2011)**

### ***DRUG ADVISORY COUNCIL COMMENTS***

***In Australia, medical professionals are faced with similar problems of treating drug addicted babies born to drug addicted mothers.***

***The drugs used in treatment have particular problems of their own with methadone, for example, known to cause death to users.***

***Australia needs to focus on prevention policies to reduce the pool of women drug users to reduce the incidence of babies born addicted.***

***Most female drug users are of child bearing age so the risk is real.***

***Women trying to withdraw from drug use whilst pregnant face the risk of miscarriage.***

***Only early intervention policies helping women to become drug abstinent can eliminate a substantial risk to women and babies.***

***Identified illicit drug using women should be diverted into court directed and supervised drug rehabilitation as best practice to eliminate the risks to both mother and baby.***

**THE DRUG ADVISORY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS-  
More detoxification & rehabilitation that gets illicit drug user's drug free.  
Court ordered and supervised detoxification & rehabilitation.  
Less illicit drug users, drug pushers and drug related crimes. 22/2011**