



Birth centre gives parents a choice

For a baby born at the Launceston Birth Centre Incorporated there are no clinical white walls or strange masked and gowned figures.

Instead there is a quiet, peaceful atmosphere.

The birth centre, situated in a ground floor flat in the Queen Victoria Hospital nurses' home, offers a home-like situation with large, quiet rooms and a normal double bed, a bathroom and a kitchen.

It gives the feeling of a home birth with the advantage of being only 100 m from the labor ward of the QVH.

One of the co-ordinators of the birth centre, Cecily Harney, said that it offers parents the chance to have the birth of their child conducted in the manner they choose, close to medical help if it is needed.

"The birth centre is a good half way house," said Cecily, who is a qualified midwife.

"It really is the alternative to a home birth — the woman

can have her baby in the flat, and be close to the hospital at the same time in case something goes wrong."

The first baby born at the centre arrived at the end of August last year.

Since then there have been 11 births at the centre.

One of the advantages of the birth centre is that parents have the freedom to do what they want.

They can even go for walks when the labor slows down.

The parents can be directly involved with the birth of the child and afterwards can keep the child with them.

"The woman can see the baby's head and feel the baby as it is coming out, it's a marvellous experience," said Cecily.

But the birth centre is not recommended to everyone.

If a woman has had a caesarian or a forceps birth, then investigations are made as to the cause and a decision on acceptance will be made.

There is a charge to use the centre

which is not refundable from medical insurance funds.

Cecily said that there had been a lot of interest in the cen-

tre, and that there was obviously a need for it in the community.

For more information on the centre, ring (003) 27 2811.



● Launceston Birth Centre co-ordinator Cecily Harney.