



## Celebrating motherhood

**G**ENTLE beginnings's Michelle Newton is passionate about helping couples experience the most natural and best possible birth they can.

And that passion has led her to become a doula.

The origin of the word doula comes from ancient Greece — originally meaning a woman who personally serves another woman, including helping with childbirth.

Today it means a woman who assists another woman during her pregnancy, birth and beyond.

Michelle trained through Optimum Birth, learning many birthing techniques, as well as being trained as a Calmbirth practitioner.

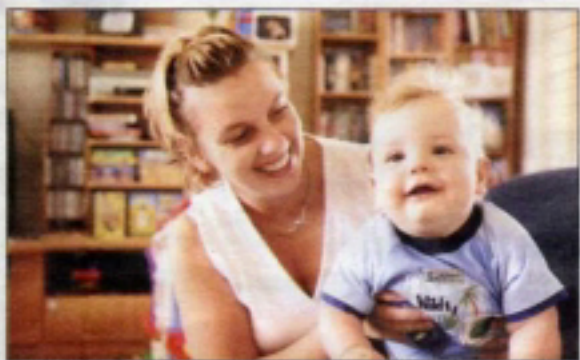
The Calmbirth program is one Michelle feels "empowers couples and allows them to take responsibility for creating their own birth experience".

Michelle has two young sons and both were born using the Calmbirth method.

"I had wonderful births that were short and drug- and intervention-free," she said.

"I felt wonderfully empowered after, and this is part of what inspired me to become a doula."

Michelle provides information to parents-to-be through several meetings, providing literature, CDs and DVDs.



From top: Ten-month-old Riley with his mother Michelle Newton is all smiles; Michelle is a qualified doula.

She also provides physical assistance during the labour and birth through massage, encouragement, relaxation and visualisation techniques.

A doula can fill in the support gap during birth, Michelle said.

"In a hospital environment, the midwife is often unable to attend the birth for the whole time.

"My job as a doula is to take care of all the comfort measures the mother might need during the labour."

Michelle said she sees pregnancy as a time of celebration of the new life, with the aim to manage and eradicate self-doubt or fear.

"I want to help women and

encourage them to look deep within," she said.

And she also understands the importance of the father's role.

"The doula is not meant to sideline or replace the father, but to encourage and support him," she said.

"Studies have shown that fathers usually take part more actively during labour when a doula is present."

Michelle has a variety of doula packages to suit individual needs.

For more information about Gentle Beginnings, call Michelle on 0414537 103 or email [shell@gentlebeginnings.com.au](mailto:shell@gentlebeginnings.com.au)

Or visit the website at [www.gentlebeginnings.com.au](http://www.gentlebeginnings.com.au)