

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of women patients draws to the attention of the House:

We believe that the Government has the health and safety of Australian women and their babies, as a high priority. This includes mothers-to-be and newborns in regional and remote communities.

There have been clearly unintended consequences of the Government's decision to cut the Extended Medicare Safety Net for Obstetrics. Since the EMSN cuts came into effect on January 01, 2010, there has been a significant shift of births into the overburdened public system.

The Extended Medicare Safety Net used to cover up to 80% of the average charge for obstetrics. Now it covers less than 25%. As mothers-to-be struggling with the cost of living, we feel this is unfair.

Women want choice and access to affordable gold standard pregnancy care, and the greatest opportunity to conceive with effective fertility treatments when necessary. We want to be cared for before, during and post our birth by the doctor of our choice.

We therefore ask the House:

to do all in its power to influence the Government to restore the Extended Medicare Safety Net for Obstetrics to cover the average out of pocket costs to women patients and their babies, which is \$2,000.

Please listen to our concerns and increase the safety net funding from covering 20% of the costs of having a baby under the care of a specialist to at least 50%.