

I am writing to comment on the bills relating to midwives and homebirth.

Much research has been done to show that home is the optimal place to give birth. Impacts on the mother, the baby, that fact that home is actually the safest place to give birth (impacted upon of course by the fact that high risk women always go to hospital and whenever serious probs arise in a home birth situation a hospital is involved. Nevertheless it is worth noting that generally the outcomes for home birth are better.)

In Holland homebirth is the norm. In *The Business of Being Born*, (www.thebusinessofbeingborn.com/) as US film about birth, it is stated that a hospital birth costs around \$25,000. I have no idea how much a hospital birth costs here but for sure it is cheaper at home, generally, with midwives charging roughly \$2,000 for a homebirth. Nobody is arguing that all births should happen at home, as there are some situations where the latest in medical technology is a godsend, as a back up. Natural is best unless contraindicated by extreme events.

The homebirth option should be supported and not forced underground with homebirth midwives uninsured, risking everything on the basis that some future (real or bogus) law suit may destroy them.

For many people homebirth is very important, the cornerstone of optimal child rearing and attachment parenting whose adherents believe is the only way out of the 'disconnect tsunami' that is powering our society's ills. For others they do not even know that homebirth is a valid option so onesided and business oriented has media coverage of this issue been. I myself viewed myself as very progressive yet I had no idea until I did some research about the value and possibility of homebirth. Most people simply have no idea and if educated we may see a demand based shift in Australia's birthing practises.

Surely it is only appropriate that is their taxes are going to pay for interventionist birth policies then they should also be used to support homebirth.

Thank you Mark O'Brien