

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I am writing to you in regard to the aforementioned bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this Australia is totally out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to choose homebirth.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this to be an unintended consequence and ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

My husband and I choose to give birth in the comfort and safety of our own home in Port Melbourne, Victoria. We are 2 highly educated individuals who made this choice. We employed 2 highly qualified midwives, Jan Ireland and Kristy Crockford and also had a doctor present, Peter Lucas. I had a strong belief in my body and it's natural ability to birth without medical intervention. I did have a back up hospital in case of an emergency but fortunately didn't need to use it.

Our choice to have a homebirth stemmed from my fear of a hospital environment. I felt safest at home with the support of my midwives and felt very fortunate to be able to make that choice.

We are planning our second child and i would be totally devastated if we could not make the choice to birth in the same way.

I also feel so devastated that my midwives who have been assisting births for over 30 years could not continue with their work under the proposed legislations.

Please, please hear us and our story...it is the story of so many and we should have the right to feel safe and comfortable when bringing little people into this world. Birth is sacred and should remain this way, no matter where you choose to give birth.

Yours sincerely

Megan Campbell.