

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related 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. However it is not acceptable to exclude homebirth from this funding. 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. Without insurance, homebirth midwives will be unable to register and Australian women will be unable to choose their own care provider and birth without a qualified professional.

Last October, my wife birthed our daughter Juanita Richardson at home with the support of a two registered independent homebirth midwives. Juanita was born safely and easily at home. My family was completely supported and the continuity of care we received was of very high standards. I have no doubt in my mind that my wife's ability to have an intervention and drug free birth was due to her informed choice to select a midwife with whom she was comfortable with and the ability to stay in our home environment.

We want to be able to birth Juanita's siblings at home in the future and save this option for future generations. Juanita will no doubt grow up with the belief that birth is a normal bodily function of a woman and may wish to choose birth at home with a private midwife for herself. However if homebirth midwives cannot be included in a professional indemnity scheme, they will not be able to register and we are not only concerned for our family but all Australian women. I find this completely unacceptable and deplorable, that a woman's right to choose who attends her birth will be vastly diminished due to the inability for homebirth midwives to be covered by an indemnity scheme.

Please take the necessary steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

Yours sincerely

Wayne Richardson