

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

I write to express my concern about the above 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.

Both of our children were born at home and had perfect births. The children did not go out for the first month of life and we were supported by our doctor and midwife at home through this period.

Our children are now 2 and 4 and are very healthy and well adjusted children. We have witnessed many hospital births and seen first hand the understaffing and associated problems within the hospital system. Hospitals are for sick people, we should be encouraging healthy mothers to have their children at home. My partner and I have been traumatised by a friend's child being born in a hospital ward and would never consider giving birth to a child anywhere else but home.

Yours sincerely

Graham Petersen