

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

What can I tell you that will allow homebirth with an independent midwife to remain a legal choice?

What can I tell you that will make homebirth with an independent midwife an equally supported choice?

Homebirth is safer than a caesarean delivery for both mother & child - is that what you need to know?

Homebirth protects mothers & children from the myriad of infectious diseases infesting hospitals (whooping cough, hospital superbugs, swine flu) - is this what you need to know?

Homebirth with an independent midwife currently costs the government nothing - and it's cheaper than a hospital birth and far cheaper than a caesarean delivery.

Homebirth is a choice that many women will make. Many women will refuse to go to hospital for this natural event. Will they be allowed to have the expertise of an independent midwife with them if they would like to hire one? Or will they be denied that care & be left to birth alone at home?

It seems that the large medical unions have been able to push their opinions on the issue of homebirth into legislation which is effectively attempting to control women & force them into the hospital system to receive pregnancy care. This is truly astonishing arrogance on behalf of the government who claimed to be consulting the community on the issue of maternity services, only to act in opposition to more than half the submissions they received to the review which were calling for more accessibility to out of hospital care & homebirth. Attempts to justify ignoring more than half the submissions have been made repeatedly by the government & medical unions by claiming that it is only 1 or 2 percent of women who currently birth at home. These statements are shocking as they amount to "it's only a minority who currently exert this right - so it doesn't matter if we take the right away from them & from all women in the future". Minority rights should never be quashed when the argument that "it is only a few" is used.

I gave birth to my first child at home this year. Any future children I have will also be born at home outside the hospital system.

Please ensure that this legislation upholds the right of any woman to hire an independent midwife & birth at home. It should be an equal choice to hospital birth, birth centre birth, and hospital-at-home birth.

You are exercising power on our behalf, acting in the role of the custodians of our freedoms. Do not let Australia take a step backwards in women's rights.

Vanessa Paton (Woman & Mother)