

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

I am writing to express my concern about the about bills. I understand that these bills 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. This is terrific as Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue, however, to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement is not acceptable. Other nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand all include homebirths in their systems. Why is Australia different? These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their National Health Scheme. Why would Australia exclude women from having these rights? Was it intentional that homebirth midwives would be unable to register with this legislation?

Please know, that it was extremely important for me to be able to have the choice to have my babies at home. Choice is the key word here. I do not think my births would have been nearly as plain sailing if I had to be in hospital. I was comfortable and relaxed at home and therefore had comfortable and relaxed births. This was also because I had continuity of care with my midwife.

Please re-think this amendment so all women can choose the right (and therefore most likely best outcome) birth for them – hospital or home.

Yours sincerely,

Jane McCammon