

Andrew Callister

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

I am writing today with great concern that if passed, the proposed legislation to establish a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for all Health Professionals by July 2010 would effectively prevent families from choosing to birth their children at home. I am calling on the Australian Government to support independent midwives who attend home births by ensuring indemnity for them, should this law be passed.

I am a father of three children, the youngest of whom was born at home in a country town with the assistance of an independent midwife and a supporting team of loving friends. After a great deal of reading and inquiry we made the choice to birth our baby at home because this was both the safest place to do so and the only place where we could keep our family together through the intimate experience. Our two older children were present and we were surrounded by a team who created the support we needed to have the empowering experience that is every family's right. The experience of birthing our baby at home was healing for our whole family. Our home birth experience, and those of many of our friends who have made the same choice, affirms to me that this right must be protected for the sake of mothers, babies, fathers, siblings and the community as a whole.

Families must be able to access registered private midwives no matter where they live. The federal government is responsible for protecting the rights of women and families to choose their health-care provider and to find someone who supports their rightful choices for where and how to birth their children. This is a matter of great importance to me and my family.

Sincerely,

Andrew Callister.