

*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.

I have four children; the first 2 were born in hospital, and the younger pair were both born at home. The difference in the quality of care I received while birthing my babies at home was remarkable. In hospital, I was one of many women birthing at the same time, and I felt I had to fight to achieve the natural births I wanted. At home I was the star of the show, and treated like a goddess! During the pregnancies with my younger children, I developed a close relationship with my private midwives. I trusted them fully and they trusted me to work in partnership with them. During the births I was listened to, treated with respect and supported to birth in my own time, in my own way. I count my 2 homebirths as among the best experiences of my life, and it is my wish that all women who want to are able to have the option of birthing at home with a private midwife.

Yours sincerely,

Allison Rosenberg.