

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

We wholeheartedly congratulate Nicola Roxon for the changes she has put in place allowing Australian women to directly access a midwife as their primary carer. We know from direct experience the benefits of continuity of care in pregnancy and birth.

However, our family is extremely concerned about a consequence of the legislation currently before the Senate re: the removal of the ability to birth at home with a known, registered, independent midwife.

We are asking that you ensure that it is not illegal to birth at home with a known midwife. We are asking that you do not remove a choice that we currently have.

So far our family has had two births - both planned as homebirths using the same two independent midwives. Our first baby was born in hospital after we transferred due to a minor complication. Our second baby was born at home.

The support and knowledge of our midwives was invaluable in both cases. When we transferred from home they came with us and stayed for the duration of the birth. We know them and they us. This changes the experience of birth. There is no fear. Safety is incredibly important to us and without the knowledge and years of experience our midwives have, we would not feel safe in either situation.

We want to have another baby next year, at home, with our midwives present. At this time we are not asking you to fund homebirth. We are asking that you continue to allow us to employ an independent midwife and have them present at the birth of our child - legally and with appropriate insurance. Please do not remove this choice.

As it stands, this legislation risks our safety and the safety of our future child.

sincerely

Felicia Semple and Simon Bird