

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 had my 9month old daughter at home in water, I had an independent midwife support me throughout my care and to this day she is someone I can call on. The care she gave me was second to none, she was on call 24/7 from the moment I booked her when I was 12weeks pregnant, she would come to my home for pre-natal visits often staying for up to 3hours answering every single question and concern I had, was a wealth of information, had a library of books and DVD's and gave me both sides of the story, I felt totally informed about everything I felt was important, had a very detailed birth plan including if I needed to transfer to hospital. My birth was wonderful, over in 9 hours, I had the support of my close family and midwife, once I birthed my child I climbed into my own bed where my husband was next to me, my family around me and my midwife....she checked my daughter with all the same procedures in a hospital except without the bright lights cold air and unfamiliar surroundings...

I am not against hospital births, I am for where ever a women feels most comfortable in giving birth, as it is a primal act and if you are stressed in any way, the natural hormones which your body produces to have your child do not kick in, (like with a cheeta in the wild it will not give birth if it does not feel safe) albeit we are not as primitive and we often use drugs to ensure the process continues in the fashion we think it should, however also I understand to save lives, my point is, we are not asking for homebirth to be the only way for women to give birth, we are asking for it to still be a choice as some women feel safer and more comfortable at home and if you are having a low risk pregnancy and want to birth at home, why make the government pay more money for you to be in hospital when it is cheaper for them for you to have it at home?

I personally would not want to give birth in a hospital especially after giving birth at home, I would not feel comfortable, I built a very strong rapport with my midwife and her and my husband where the only ones in the room when I gave birth, it was a private affair, in hospital this is not the case. Birthing is natural, our bodies are built to do it, it does NOT need medical intervention for it to happen, or need to be in a sterile brightly lit room with doctors and nurses that generally have never met you before to be there just in case!

Parents have a right to choose where their children are born, and if it is made illegal I am sure it will become an underground occurrence as having a hospital birth for some is way to far against what is important for them, I don't want to see this happen, and I do want to see the choice of where to give birth remain. In the UK homebirths are common place and supported, I fell pregnant in the UK and

being Australian returned home to have my child, the care and support I was given by my doctors was not one of shock and discouragement but one of support and informative solutions.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my point of view, I know you only want what is best for everyone, and for me and many thousands of Australians that is the right to choose and support where their children, nephews, nieces, granddaughters and grandsons are given birth too.

Yours sincerely

Tamara Newlands