

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.

The logic is very simple:

1. A woman in a civilized society should have the right to choose to have her baby at home
2. As per statistically robust research, birthing at home is as safe as hospital for most normal women
3. In other civilized countries (The Netherlands, UK, New Zealand and others) home birth is encouraged
4. There are many strong reasons why birthing at home is better for mother and baby in the long term – certainly enough rationale for an informed woman to choose home birth
5. Babies being born at home would save the Government 100's of millions of dollars each year
6. Some women who want to give birth at home are going to do it anyway – all you're doing is driving it underground ... surely not the outcome you want?

I'm a 50 year old male management consultant. My son was born beautifully at home. It is unbelievable to me that a modern so-called-rational society would make home birth inaccessible.

In short, at minimum you have to allow home birth. If you were to investigate the situation deeply with an open mind, you would conclude that in fact the Government should support and encourage home birth.

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.

Yours sincerely

Paul Collings