

I wish to draw attention to section 101 (ii) in which a registered health practitioner must not practise the health profession unless professional indemnity insurance arrangements are in force. Also to section 148 in which a person must not direct or incite a registered health practitioner that amounts to unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct, incurring penalties.

Registered homebirth midwives are not covered by indemnity insurance due to the small numbers practicing and therefore it is not viable to indemnify them. The introduction of this legislation means that homebirth midwives will no longer be legally allowed to practice midwifery without insurance.

Therefore a registered homebirth midwife will not be able to attend a women's birth in her home, as they have in the past. This not only affects me but every women in Australia who chooses to birth at home with a registered midwife. This will also affect families who wish to choose the continuity of care and support that a midwife provides and therefore affects unborn children. I have two daughters, and I want them to be able to have the option of a homebirth with an independent midwife, if they choose.

Although I don't believe a homebirth is for every woman or me personally, while I don't believe every woman will choose a homebirth, I STRONGLY believe that a woman should have the freedom to choose where she wishes to birth.

This legislation will vastly limit a women's choice to birth where and with whom she chooses. This will force women into over-burdened hospital systems or to birth at home without the support of a qualified professional midwife of their choice. I am afraid this will end up in higher mortality rates for both mothers and babies.

I am opposed to the introduction of this legislation and I suggest that an amendment be made to include an exemption for Independent Midwives to require indemnity insurance.

Yours Sincerely

Jen Hitchman