

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

I write to express my very real concern at the proposed aforementioned Bills. It may have been an unintended oversight but the practice of midwifery outside the domain of public and private hospitals will effectively be outlawed with this legislation and the national registration and accreditation of health professionals preventing homebirth midwives from registering due to the unwillingness of any party to indemnify a small group of privately practicing midwives.

Yet it would seem that small as the group may be they have made a massive positive impact on the lives of so many women and though I am not one of those who have found comfort in homebirth through a private midwife after a traumatic hospital birth (which appears quite common rather than rare) I have found comfort in birthing my babies at home without the hassle of a hospital birth (changing location during labour, separation from my other children at an important time, unnecessary procedures, and even the hospital midwives admitting they need to do SOMETHING just to feel they are doing something) this is gross mismanagement of our very precious healthcare system.

At a time where budget is everything and as a nurse I see the shortcuts taken to make that budget it does seem highly unusual to force a woman who is going through a normal life event to lay in a hospital bed while some other unfortunate soul really needs that bed – for real health problems.

I do agree that there are women who require hospital at this time in their lives and they do well to use the specialists but for the average birthing woman in our era of a plethora of tests and scans etc. to determine fetal health there should be a choice for the low risk woman...for the health benefits, both mental and physical, the budgetary benefits for the healthcare system and the personal benefits for the extended family as they participate in the birth of this new life.

The medical system has made enormous changes over the past few generations in the way birth is handled, from fathers not being allowed with their partner to keeping all babies in the nursery and feeding bottles four hourly – we have come a long way in the last fifty years, it would be such a shame to go backwards now.

It seems to me that the need for careful consideration of a legislative change that effectively outlaws a practice that has in no way attracted the need for this type of treatment should occur and an enquiry into the drive for a change such as this be carefully examined. Who is to benefit?

The perceived risks of homebirth are far less than imagined and numerous studies have shown the effectiveness of such a healthcare model. Other countries have adopted this model on a community basis which I believe has its flaws with regard to continuity of care but if parents to be make a well informed choice to pay out-of-pocket expenses for a service that they feel beneficial to their health and that of their unborn child then I cannot fathom why the government would instead introduce a Bill to force women into an unfounded model of care for a low risk birth, accounting for the majority of births in Australia.

The midwives you will be sacking are the best you have, most extremely accomplished in the 'medical' arena before starting out on their own with years of experience under their belt before having the confidence to branch out and do what they first set out to do, to be midwives *to be with woman* – Australian women deserve access to their services and they certainly deserve the choice to make an informed decision about their own bodies – these women are not being 'silly' but rather accept full responsibility for themselves and their bodies, are usually very well informed about the process of birth and generally have previously experienced a hospital birth.

Already Australia is well outside World Health Organisation guidelines with regards the caesarean rate and cord clamping protocol, need we infringe one set of rigid values on the entire community? Australia is a land that is young and FREE. Lengthy consideration should occur before changing the basis of our nation. The midwives you will be sacking are the best you have, most extremely accomplished in the 'medical' arena before starting out on their own with y – Australian women deserve access to their services.

Yours Sincerely,

Jackie Cogdell