

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 have birthed two children at home, my first baby, Ethan was born at home in 2003 and my second baby, Huon was born at home last year. Both births were the most amazing, empowering moments of my life. The continuity of care and the relationship that I formed with my wonderful midwife, Akal Khalsa will last with me forever. I cannot imagine giving birth anywhere else. In fact I will not be having any more children if Homebirth becomes illegal as I refuse to give birth in a medical institution. Every women should be given the choice to birth where she feels most comfortable.

Yours sincerely

Tarryn Lamb