

Submission to Senate

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

My name is Elaine Fragar. My daughter-in-law has recently given birth at home, in a country town in Western Australia. They were assisted in this by an independent midwife. I was, at first, very concerned about my daughter-in-law's plan, but was totally convinced of the validity of it, as I followed the couple and their two other children through this. The thing that impressed me most was the calm manner in which the birth was allowed to happen. There was no packing of suitcases, uncertain travel, filling in forms, being in a foreign atmosphere, arranging child-care. My daughter-in-law has suffered significantly from post-natal depression after the first two births. This birth, on the other hand, was a calm and joyful event, with much less stress, and no post-natal depression following.

I am concerned that the draft legislation to establish a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for all Health Professionals by July 2010 is a movement in the wrong direction. Rather than making it difficult for women to give birth at home, if that is their wish, we should, as a society, be providing more and more support for them to do this in a safe environment. Denying indemnity insurance to private homebirth midwives will simply make it more difficult for those mothers who chose home-birth to have adequate care when they need it. They then have the choice of giving birth in a foreign environment, when their basic instincts are saying otherwise, or giving birth without the care they need.

Please do not support this legislation. Allow our women to choose for themselves as they think best. Allow private midwives the protection they need to do their work safely and without stress.

Sincerely,

Elaine Fragar