

I am writing to you with concern that the proposed Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009, and two related Bills, does not go far enough to adequately support all Australian women to make an informed choice regarding their right to birth in the manner they elect with expert and professional care.

My daughter and her husband chose to have their two children birthed in the warm, caring and joyously relaxed comfort of their own home. Their home birth midwife, who has over twenty years experience in both the public and private hospital systems, and is currently employed at a major general Hospital birthing unit, provided months of intimate care, encouragement and education for my daughter and her partner at their home, as a professional midwife and over the time as an intimate friend. Both births were a loving and joyous occasion of a natural and miraculous event that many women are denied of achieving due to pressure of monetary and time constraints of hospital "case load" obstetrical goals. In my experience of 24 years as a registered Nurse such care is not able to be achieved in the sterile and often chaotic environment of a hospital unit.

In countries such as The Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom women's right to choose homebirth and funded qualified midwifery care through their national health system is supported. Many informed Australian women would choose a natural homebirth with the care of fully qualified and dedicated Home Birthing Midwives. Those midwives need Commonwealth support to ensure that professional indemnity insurance is available at a realistic cost to allow Australian women to choose the basic right of birthing choice and allow access to Medicare and the PBS for appropriate qualified and experienced midwives. I ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

With Kind Regards

Amanda Furlong