

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 am a Registered Midwife and a proud mother of two beautiful boys. I made an informed choice to birth at home with my husband and midwives by my side supporting me. I cannot ever imagine birthing in hospital having birthed in the comforts of my very own home surrounded by people I love. Rigid hospital policies and procedures, time constraints, staff shortages and the lack of hospital beds are all contributing factors to the forever rising intervention rates in this country of which I chose not to be another statistic. Every Woman has the right to choose where, when and with whom they give birth. Please support my right to birth at home.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Anne Maggs
Registered Midwife
Central Coast Maternity Coalition Treasurer