

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to make a comment about the proposed Health Legislation Amendment, for Midwives in particular. I support midwives getting access to indemnity insurance, PBS and Medicare and think this a great step forward to allowing greater access for women in pregnancy and childbirth to one on one care for normal, natural birth in the hospital system. However I must strongly protest against any measures that will outlaw privately practicing midwives from attending homebirths as is currently proposed from July 2010.

I had a beautiful homebirth to my first child on February 8 this year and cannot imagine a better way to birth. I was planning on getting pregnant again next year but have decided I will not now as I really object to being forced to birth in a hospital against my wishes, and do not feel safe to birth at home without the skilled assistance of my midwife.

The UK, New Zealand and the Netherlands are countries where homebirth is actively encouraged by the government due to lower medical intervention rates, less financial burden on the government, higher birth satisfaction, breastfeeding and parent-child bonding, and proven safety for low risk pregnancies. Please look at the recent Netherlands report which proved that homebirth is just as safe as hospital birth for low risk women. ("Perinatal mortality and morbidity in a nationwide cohort of 529 688 low-risk planned home and hospital births" A de Jonge,^a BY van der Goes,^b ACJ Ravelli,^c MP Amelink-Verburg,^{a,d} BW Mol,^b JG Nijhuis,^e J Bennebroek Gravenhorst,^a SE Buitendijka 15 April 2009).

If homebirth is to be outlawed in Australia, women will have less rights and autonomy over their own bodies which will fall far behind other countries, there will be more women birthing at home alone which raises the risks of maternal and infant mortality, and many experienced midwives will lose their livelihood or risk being jailed or fined \$30,000.

Please reconsider and include independent, privately practicing midwives to obtain indemnity insurance, medicare and prescribing rights so that homebirth remains a legal option for the thousands of women who choose this option. Or at the very least, exclude midwives from requiring indemnity insurance to practice!

Yours in desperation,
Virginia Maddock