

Branwen Hooke

10th July 2009

To the Senate Enquiry Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I am the mother of two children, both born at home with private midwives in attendance. The births of my babies were profound experiences in my life, and the care I received from my professional midwives was outstanding.

It greatly distresses me therefore to learn that under the proposed new legislation before parliament homebirth with midwifery care could become illegal in Australia.

I have been discussing this issue with many people in the past few months, and I am concerned that should homebirth be made illegal, many people would simply choose to birth at home without any professional care. This would be a terrible outcome.

It seems to me that choice is an integral part of our culture. As parents we choose schools, sporting groups, healthcare professionals religious groups, childcare options, to name just a few. I strongly believe that the right to choose to have a homebirth with a midwife as primary caregiver is just as personal and important a choice.

I have been told that homebirth parents are a minority group, and are therefore not a priority to our government. Please don't allow discrimination against a minority group to take place.

Removing this choice, this right to choose, would be a big step backwards for woman's rights in Australia. I ask you to make every choice available to every woman.

Yours sincerely,

Branwen Hooke