

To whom it may concern

I am writing to support current initiatives before the Senate Standing Committee enabling the continuation of Homebirth services via private midwifery.

In particular, this relates to the ability of private midwives to access Medicare funding, access the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and receive Indemnity Premium support.

I chose to birth my two children at home after reviewing literature worldwide and considering my birthing choice and my personal preferences (Children were born in 2000 and 2001). This was a considered decision and a fantastic one. I chose two midwives who were highly skilled and trained. I had continuity of medical care during prenatal, labour and postnatal stages. I felt that I had superior medical treatment customised to suit my individuals needs. I also believe that I was carefully and skillfully monitored, and if I had needed an escalation of treatment that we had plans in place to do this in a timely manner. I believe that the risks were well managed. As a healthy woman who was relaxed and supported, I was able to contribute to my birthing experience as an active participant and I believe the totality of this experience lead to two great outcomes.

I believe that we need to ensure homebirth is retained as a viable birthing option for women. However, it needs to be regulated to ensure practitioners are skilled and held accountable for their practice. If this is not the case it will still exist, but as a dangerous fringe activity which will enhance dangerous practices leading to poor outcomes for women and their babies.

I understand that birth at home is currently not the norm in Australian households. However it is a valid choice for those of us who believe birth is a natural state and not always well facilitated in the ill-health methodologies of our medical system. It should also be respected as a choice for marginalised woman who, perhaps due to sexual assault, religious or cultural beliefs, are not always well accommodated in our institutional medical settings and need an individualised alternative.

I am the General Manager of a \$2 Billion Agricultural business in WA. I am a lecturer in the MBA program at Curtin Business School. I spend my life (successfully) working in a rational business model.

As both a business leader and mother of two homebirthed children, I wish to lend my support to private midwifery and homebirth as a choice for women.

I would be happy to speak before the Senate Committee should this be useful.

Regards

Virginia Miltrup

