

To the Secretary
and Senate Committee,

My partner and I have had a very successful homebirth with the help of a very good midwife, for whose services [and significant insurance costs] we invested nearly the entire baby-bonus.

We are certain that the birth of our son would have cost a lot more tax-payers money, and would have certainly been a lot more traumatic, if not 'needing [some kind of] intervention' had it happened in a hospital.

We are not writing to ask to be re-funded the expenses we saved the public health system and the tax payer.

We are writing to urge you to realize the "Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills" and implement legislation that will treat health consumers equally. We ask that all related legislation include midwives caring for women at home and that these services will have the same Medicare rebate as equivalent birth related medical services in the public health system.

We fully agree with the Secretary of the Austral. Homebirth Association, Justine Caines, and state that:

'It is unacceptable and unsafe to force a woman into a choice that is not optimal for her, whether that is a hospital birth or a birth at home without midwifery support. It is absolutely impossible to understand the government's position on this, other than to say that they have bowed to political pressure from medical lobby groups.

....

It appears that having a Health Minister who is a woman, a recent mother, and a lawyer understanding consumers' rights, is not proving to be an advantage for women.

Removing women's rights to the point where we are back providing care in dark alleys or in back rooms is ridiculous in 2009.'

We ask you to fully realize the matter at hand and to prioritise women's rights and choices regarding their health over economical and political interests of medical professions.

Best Regards,

Walter Stahl