

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.

Australia is a democratic country, a lucky country, a country that people from far and wide immigrate to, to settle here in peace and to have the freedom to choose life's options. Home birthing is only one of them and as such we all should have the freedom and government financial support to our have those choices available.

Once again, please reconsider enacting these current bills/submissions and have the legislation amended to ensure all health consumers be treated equally by ensuring all midwives caring for women at home are included.

Yours sincerely

Gabriele Bugala