

To: Committee Secretary

Re: Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

Provision must be made in this legislation for homebirth attended by Private midwives.

It is an outrage to me to see the possible extinction of professional, private midwifery services in Australia. Currently, private midwives who attend homebirths (and hospital births) operate within the guidelines of their profession. They also currently have access to training and professional development, until this legislation becomes active.

This legislation is not going to improve maternity services, its going to drive homebirth underground. It's going to mean that private midwives no longer have access to standard professional development, and professional accountability. As a consumer and as a mother, this concerns me greatly.

One thing is certain, we will always have homebirth. Do not kid yourself that you can put a stop to it. Making it an offence for midwives to attend women at home will not stop homebirth. But what it will do is make women much more reluctant to interface with other medical professionals and hospitals during pregnancy and birth.

This is not just a matter of public health.

This is a matter of a woman's right to choose where she gives birth, how she gives birth, and who is there to attend her. It is my choice whether I have a homebirth or not, and it is my choice to have a midwife attend me, or not.

It is beyond belief that a government would try and legislate, such that midwives cannot attend homebirths.

Homebirth must be provided for in this legislation.

For the sake of not "*polarising the professions*", the Maternity Services Review has severely impacted on the safe practices of homebirthing families in this country.

Regards

Louise Christensen