

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. Women are very lucky to have access to such wonderful, caring, experienced women to support & guide their births. Without a doubt normal birth is the best possible start we could ever give our children. Please do not take away this gift of health for our future generations. More home births would mean utilising the wealth of skill in our midwives currently practicing privately as well as the many who aspire to do so. It would also relieve a lot of the pressure for beds within the public health system.

I believe that being able to choose my caregivers during pregnancy, the environment in which to birth my babies and also the professionals who touch my body is a deeply personal and basic human right.

Please do not take this away.

Sincerely,

Amber Chamberlain