

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a mother of three children born at home with competent and highly skilled midwives. I am greatly concerned that this choice may not be available to women as from July 2010.

I am pleased that recent developments in maternity reform by the Federal Government will bring ground breaking improvements with midwives in private practice being given prescription rights and indemnity insurance. Minister Roxan has also assured women are provided the choice of continuity of care with a known midwife throughout pregnancy, birth and post natal period.

However, it appears that birth care at home will not be covered by the new Commonwealth supported insurance scheme and new national registration rules will require all health practitioners to be covered by professional indemnity insurance. This will effectively make homebirth midwifery care unavailable. There could be terrible consequences with this arrangement.

Women would be denied a reasonable choice. This is not appropriate in a society that respects women's rights in reproduction and sovereignty over their bodies.

Making homebirth care unavailable will not stop women birthing at home. It will force homebirth underground, seriously increasing the risks to women and babies. As you know, in many other developed countries, health services recognize the safety of homebirth, recognize women's right to make choices, and provide a publically funded service for homebirth.

Please ensure that homebirth with a midwife in private practice remains a choice for Australian women.

Yours sincerely,

Erika Hobba