

To the Committee Secretary, Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs,

I am writing in response to the Maternity Review and the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills.

In particular I am writing to you about Homebirth and the legality around this in light of these Bills.

Let me first paint the picture of the miracle of birth I witnessed early this year. My partner's sister had said she would have her baby on the weekend, and true to her word, Saturday night at 11.30pm we received a phone call telling us contractions had started. She was at her mothers in Glenelg. She gathered her things and they drive to our place in Ovingham (closer to the Women's and Children's Hospital Birthing Centre where she was booked in) as the midwife (not the midwife she had had all prenatal checkups with) had said to stay at home until the contractions were 3 in ten minutes. By 12.30am there were regular contraction and she was getting the urge to push. We all piled into the car and drove the 5 minutes to the hospital, (as we were driving I was thinking "where are you supposed to get a park close by, you can't predict how long labour is going to last").

The Birthing Centre was quite spacious (compared to the birthing rooms I had seen on the way; that looked just like any other room in the hospital), although it was still very sterile, there was no colour anywhere. The midwife began to run the bath, however the urge to push was strong and 'mum' didn't want to move. After 4 hours of slow pushing she positioned herself on a birthing stool leaning up against her own mother, there she gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. It was the most amazing thing I have seen in my life!

Being a part of this birth process was amazing but it left me convinced I would have things planned out differently.

I am a 28 year old women, I have no children as yet so I my choices do not factor into the statistics of this bill, but I do want it to be known that I want a homebirth for my children.

I have been planning to become pregnant next year and therefore would be giving birth after July 2010. Have I mentioned that I want to Homebirth!

So I ask you, why has this choice been taken away from me? I will now either birth at home without an independent midwife; without the skill of professional help me deliver my baby, to refer me onto a hospital should the situation need or I will birth in the hospital potentially with a midwife I have never seen before, in a space unfamiliar to me.

I have been put in this position because my government has written a bill stating that independent midwives cannot practice without being registered and they cannot be registered without insurance and they cannot get insurance.

So, to My Government, I say "FIX IT"

It is clear my government needs to

- ensure that birth at home is included in the Government's plans to provide midwives with Medicare, indemnity and access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. This would require some source of insurance covering homebirth to be found.

My Government, please do not take my choice away. I want to have a legal homebirth after July 2009.

Claire Boland