

Dear Senators,

My wife and I wish to convey our utmost concern that Home birth has not been included in the Bill below.

We consider ourselves pretty normal folk, we are both teachers, we were well informed about our choice to birth our two daughters with Midwifery support at home.

It is important that ALL CHOICES are supported for women, so that families can safely bring children into the world any what ever environment they feel most comfortable and safe in.

For my wife who felt very uncomfortable in hospitals and had an association with them as a place of sickness and opposed to life; giving birth at home in the care of two midwives from Geelong Hospital with 35 years experience between them, gave her great confidence and wonderful, joyous natural birth experiences.

From Belinda:

Homebirth begins with your first visit from your main midwife at your home, with a cuppa.

It is imperative that you feel confident and comfortable with your midwife. She continued

check ups that are normally done through a medical clinic or maternal health centre right in

our lounge room. Often these visits would last from half an hour to hours. I adore my

nurse, she is extraordinary. I paid her \$250 the first birth and nothing for the second-

though I insisted she take a hamper of delicacies. Over months we go through scenarios, I

ask a million questions and laugh a lot. a few weeks before the baby is due, the pool, the

oxygen, and other medical bits and pieces for stitches are left at home in preparation for

the birth.

My first birth was 15 hours. My mum (who is a nurse) and mother of four was with me, my

husband and then as things hotted up my two midwives. Mind you at 10pm I called her.

She arrived after a shift at the local hospital, she stayed until 3am! I gave birth with the fire

roaring, in a birth pool in the lounge room. It was wonderful (really it was- breast feeding

well thats another thing...), my home was set up beautifully and I felt so safe and happy. It

was such a relief to stay at home and not have the anxiety of WHEN to get in the car for the

25 minute drive to hospital. I had a lot of trouble feeding and was so fortunate to have a

home birth midwife that visited me days after and then weekly for weeks!

My second birth came quickly with labour starting while we were at the nearby beach, I

went home with my husband and mother once again, to fill the pool and get ready for a

quick birth! My gorgeous midwife arrived to find me laboring heavily but confidently, I gave birth within 17 minutes, in the pool which we set up at the end of the bed. This time I went straight to bed and enjoyed healing up straight away in my own room, with a wonderful meal immediately on my lap from my mum.

We urge you to consider the high success rate of home birth. At home, away from medical intervention, women are more likely to be relaxed and in connection with their bodies and their babies.

Australian women deserve choice and home birth is very important to many many women.

But we should not be doing it alone and we need your help to support an ammendment to the Bill below.

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

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 home birth 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.

Sincerely

Tristan P Phieler and B Claveria-Phieler