

Dear Senator,

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Inquiry into Health
Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and
two related bills

My two children, Riley almost 3 and Vera 9 months, were both born at home with a private practice midwife in attendance. I felt totally safe at home and had continuity of care, a familiar comfortable environment to birth in, the ability to birth in my own way / time (not as instructed by hospital policy) and to know the people who would be with us during this extremely unique time. We had a well established relationship with our midwife who is fully qualified, fully equipped, and extremely experienced. We had the same midwife for both our children.

This model of care enabled Vera's birth and Riley's birth to be such special, yet natural normal safe experiences. It also gives both the mother and the entire family support from the moment the pregnancy is confirmed well into those early weeks of the life changing experience of caring for a newborn.

I understand the reasoning behind asking midwives to register and therefore regulating their skills and practices but these bills exclude instead of include. They shut out and close down instead of regulating and ensuring safety.

These bills must be changed to include private practice midwives. Our choice to birth at home with a private practice midwife should be supported. The current guidelines for the publicly funded homebirth options through hospitals ensure that the majority of women who go through these programs do not end up birthing at home as they chose.

This is not about pitting medical practitioners against each other or even women against each other. These bills will affect real families and real choices.

The reason home birth is chosen by a small percentage is because of the current system. Women are not entirely educated about their choices, and those who are can't afford homebirth as (yes you guessed it) it's not supported.

Australian women must all be entitled to the same Medicare support wherever they give birth, and midwives must all be entitled to obtain professional indemnity insurance wherever they work.

The bottom line is that Homebirth should be a choice for all women and represents a significant cost saving to the government. Women who birth at home are less likely to have interventions including assisted deliveries and caesarean sections. A Homebirth also provides the most likely option for a culturally and socially appropriate birth. (eg Muslim, indigenous etc)

Both my husband and I are well educated professionals who put the safety of our children first. If you are acting on my behalf you will not make homebirth illegal. These bills defy all logic and it is a travesty and insult to use the excuse that homebirth is too controversial to gain the governments support.

Yours sincerely

Sonia Gregson