

The 3 bills to be considered by the Committee have been drafted to provide Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and Indemnity Premium support to midwives. These bills if passed into legislation in their current form will not provide funding or indemnity for homebirth midwives. This legislation will then intersect with National Health Registration legislation (to come into force in July next year) that will require all health professionals to hold indemnity insurance. This will prevent midwives providing homebirth from registering and thus make their homebirth practice unlawful.

To the members of the 'Community Affairs - Legislation Committee'

This approach is not entirely in the interests of women, though it purports to be. It is important in developing policy to give primacy to the rights of individuals to exercise a choice, where ever possible. Obviously it is not as easy to argue that we should all have a choice say to; poison a river with arsenic. This is clearly undesirable and a suitable area for government to regulate human choice. However there are areas where government regulation should not infringe, and where fundamental human rights should have some primacy, and where such a valuing of human rights is a sign of a mature society.