

17/07/2009

RE: Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009

In March 2008 my daughter gave birth to my grandson at her home with a private midwife attending. I was lucky enough to be there soon after the birth and the experience for the whole family was wonderful. It was a safe and beautiful way to welcome a new baby into our family.

As a result of my experience at my daughter's birth I am very sad to hear that the changes to the legislation will mean that a homebirth with an independent midwife will become illegal in Australia from July 2010 because midwives will be unable to obtain indemnity insurance. Midwives in private practice are the only health professionals in Australia currently without indemnity insurance. This is not due to their practice or claims history, it is simply due to the fact that they are small in number. Medical practitioners and their clients currently enjoy indemnity protection at an estimated cost of \$500 Million.

If national registration proceeds as planned women choosing homebirth will be unable to access a registered midwife, and essentially the practice will go 'underground'. It is not acceptable that women are unable to choose the care of a registered midwife to give birth at home. Homebirth is a nationally funded option in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and The Netherlands. I ask that you support a woman's right to choose where and with whom she gives birth.

Please do not allow the choice of a homebirth with a independent midwife be taken away from my daughter, my grandchildren and the women of Australia. Homebirth is safe, low cost and a great way of freeing up our hospitals and surgical theatres for the sick people that really need them.

Yours Sincerely,

Pauline Garden