

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

This is a standard letter of objection, but I would like to add personally, that I disagree with your attempts to legislate every facet of our choice.

Home birthing has a healthy and sustained record of recommendation and acceptance by women and their partners. There have been numerous debates over the years about the safety and effectiveness of home births. But you insult the women who make this choice, who have made this choice, by judging that they don't know how to make the correct decisions, that they don't think long and hard about their choices. It is their baby, their lives that they are making choices on.

There are major reasons behind this choice. It is far from arbitrary. They have done the research and find it a far better and natural option than to be in a medical environment where often that choice is taken out of their hands 'in the interests of their own well-being'.

On the question of safety, not every birth that takes place in the sanctity of the medical environment is a success, despite all the expertise and back-up.

This is a request and appeal not to make these decisions just because you can, or you think it right.. Other people don't agree with your thoughts but are required to follow them for no other reason but your position.

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 homebirth 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.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Kells