



# NEW BEGINNINGS MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

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To whom it may concern,

Whilst the intersection of the Commonwealth legislation to regulate and accredit all health professionals is perhaps a step forward for midwifery, it has struck midwives in private practice a cruel blow.

This new legislation will eliminate the ability for a woman to contract a private registered midwife providing homebirth, simply because the midwife is unable to obtain indemnity insurance.

In turn, this will place the lives of women and their babies in grave peril should they choose to birth at home, without a qualified professional. It is simply negligence on the part of the Government to put women in this situation. Legislation or not, some women will always choose to birth at home, it seems ludicrous that they will be denied access to the safety of a midwife.

Why is it that Minister Roxon is unwilling to provide homebirth midwives with the same protection as all other health professionals?

Since 2001 approx \$1billion of taxpayer funds has supported medical indemnity premiums. Women who choose homebirth are the only health consumers without the protection of indemnity insurance. This is clearly discrimination.

As a developed country Australia is out of step with other nations such as Canada, UK, New Zealand and The Netherlands, which offer public funded homebirth. By making homebirth unlawful Australia is on par with a state of the U.S like Alabama where capital punishment still exists.

As a midwife in private practice, I am demanding indemnity support for homebirth midwives and the protection of insurance for consumers.

I have completed three years of nurses training and further training to be a midwife, I have been in private practice since 1995. It is ridiculous that I should be forced to close my practice and deny women the choice of birth place due to a lack of insurance issue. Homebirth is a safe option for low risk women, and this has been proven in several large studies.

I believe that national registration and accreditation is a step forward and Important in maintaining quality of care for women. However, Registration and insurance should not be linked together. It is obscene that it be a requirement of registration to have a product that simply does not exist.

I implore the Government to see this outrageous mistake and secure insurance for ALL midwives choosing to work in ALL aspects of pregnancy and birth.

Yours sincerely,

Robyn Dempsey

Midwife in private practice