

My concerns are related to independently practicing midwives:

The fact that if professional indemnity insurance is a requirement of registration to the national board, and that if without registration midwives are breaking the law to continue practicing The new National Registration and Accreditation for the Health Professions Scheme, will make it illegal for privately practicing midwives to continue in their profession, as they will be de-registered due to a lack of professional indemnity insurance. This will essentially make it impossible for the midwife of my choice to care for me during pregnancy, and it will mean that to birth in my chosen place I must have my baby at home without a qualified professional to assist me.

The standard of care that my privately practicing midwives gave to me during my 3 pregnancies and births was so far superior to that of the standard medical health care systems in which I experienced my first pregnancy and birth. My experience with these midwives is that they are incredibly dedicated and professional individuals. The outcomes I experienced with their care were excellent and this is mirrored in the data collected and collated by the perinatal data collection unit in relation to home births (e.g the 2006 report "Hospital Profile of Maternal and Perinatal Data: Planned Homebirths 2005). To deny these women the right to keep practicing and take their service away from mothers and families that choose not to participate in, what many see as, an inappropriate medical model of care would be tragic and unnecessary.

In Victoria more and more hospital services are being moved into more appropriate home based care (e.g. Hospital in the home, aging in place, day procedures with home visits, community care packages etc.). It would appear to be contra to these Government policies if midwives were not supported to provide private care.

Additionally these privately practicing midwives are 'plugging the gaps' in some rural areas where maternity services have been closed down (such as my home town, Rochester). From my personal experience, if it had not been for the care of my own midwife my third child would have been born on the way to a hospital (he came in such a rush). Imagine the difference between a baby born on the side of a road trying to get to a hospital, as opposed to the baby being born in the warmth, safety and

security of his own home. So for many, if private midwives cannot continue it would be further adding to the disadvantage of rural women (and their babies).

Both the state and federal Governments heavily subsidise obstetric professional indemnity. This could (and should) be extended to privately practicing midwives.

Thankyou for your time and consideration of this submission. I would be happy to talk with anyone in relation to this submission.

Yours Sincerely,

Sonia Martin