

16th July 2009

To the Senate Committee

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Re: Exposure draft Health Practitioner Regulation National Law

As a consumer of maternity care in this country this draft concerns me greatly. I have had 3 daughters and expect another child in October. After unsatisfactory births in the private and then public systems both of which placed my baby and myself in physical danger I understandable choose to home birth for my third child. Due to the lack of midwives providing birthing services within an 8 hours drive of my Townsville home I made the difficult decision to birth without the assistance of a midwife. My decision was based on my understanding of birth and my fear of the hospital system in which a woman gets lost amongst the herd mentality. This birth was beautiful, just magic and my safest and healthy experience so far. However I should never have been forced to make this decision based on a lack of available services. For my fourth and upcoming birth I have chosen to once again birth at home. This time a midwife is in the vicinity and is available to provide birthing services. I have employed this midwife out of my families own pocket and am thrilled to have this option available to me for this birth.

It disturbs me greatly and angers me further that home birth as a choice would be taken from women with the introduction of the new Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. The decision is obviously not based on a question of safety as without doubt homebirth is a safe if not safer for low risk women than the hospital system. Which leads to the conclusion that the underlying goal is to further line the pockets of obstetricians in private practice, who are indeed the only group that would be disadvantaged, all be it financially, by the government giving its support to home birth midwives. The government currently spends millions of dollars each year on insurance for Obstetricians and yet they cannot see fit to support midwives in the same way.

My request is that the government find a way for midwives to be able to provide homebirth care after the new regulation system starts on 1 July 2010. An exemption needs to be provided for independent midwives in requiring indemnity insurance (given they've already been practicing without it for 8 years), alternatively the government could subsidise insurance for IM's as they do for other groups of care providers.

Whilst I will not have more children after the changes I can guarantee that my sisters and daughters will. I will not see them lose this basic right to choose where they birth their babies and with whom.

Regards,

Philippa Scott