

Bill B Exposure Draft

Jodie Miller

To NRAIP: 17/7/09 04:49PM

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to thank the Australian Government for the recent maternity reforms enabling midwives to fill the maternity services gap. I think the new provisions for continuity of carer, PBS and indemnity insurance for midwives will greatly improve outcomes and satisfaction for the next generation of mothers and babies.

However, I feel the lack of provision of Indemnity Insurance to Independent Midwives and the career-busting fines associated with practising without insurance have the potential to make birth *more dangerous* for women and their babies rather than safer. Independent Midwives provide an essential service that is personalised, culturally tailored to the family and accommodating of the baggage that women bring to pregnancy, childbirth and new motherhood. Making home birth illegal by default next year will not stop women from seeking out home birth midwives and doulas to support them, nor will it stop them from choosing to birth at home without a qualified advocate.

Several Queensland hospitals (RBWH, Mater) have just updated their admission and transfer policies to enable smoother, safer transfer from home to hospital in the event medical attention is required for women or their babies in the home birth situation. Since these pathways already exist for some, why halt the progress? Why not set a new benchmark and re-educate the medical establishment on definitions of 'safety'?

If women can choose a scheduled caesarean on the Medicare purse, why can't women equally choose to birth at home? Both are a minority of the birthing population. Both are entitled to their informed choice. There must be some mechanism to give birth choices to ALL women in Australia that makes women feel safe and that honours the vocation of independent midwifery.

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Jodie Miller
Queensland

"Be the change you want to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi