

Exposure draft

17/07/2009

17 July 2009

Submission:

Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council National Registration and Accreditation Implementation Project Exposure Draft – Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009

Re Independent (Homebirth) Midwifery

I wish to draw attention to section 101 (ii) in which a registered health practitioner must not practise the health profession unless professional indemnity insurance arrangements are in force. Also to section 148 in which a person must not direct or incite a registered health practitioner that amounts to unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct, incurring penalties.

Registered homebirth midwives are not covered by indemnity insurance due to the small numbers practicing and therefore it is not viable to indemnify them. The introduction of this legislation means that homebirth midwives will no longer be legally allowed to practice midwifery without insurance.

Therefore a registered homebirth midwife will not be able to attend a women's birth in her home, as they have in the past. This not only affects me but every women in Australia who chooses to birth at home with a registered midwife. This will also affect families who wish to choose the continuity of care and support that a midwife provides and therefore affects unborn children.

Homebirth is as safe, if not safer than hospital birth; many studies prove this. Homebirth offers many benefits to mothers, babies and their families. It also offers many financial benefits to the healthcare system, such as reduced strain on the hospital system, lower cost for labour/birth, and increased midwife satisfaction and retention rates when they have available to them a full scope of practice.

This legislation will vastly limit a women's choice to birth where and with whom she chooses. This will force women into hospital systems that over-medicalise birth or to birth at home without the support of a qualified professional midwife of their choice.

I am opposed to the introduction of this legislation and I suggest that an amendment be made to include an exemption for Independent Midwives who require indemnity insurance.

Yours Sincerely

Kathryn Solomon
Midwife and Mother