

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

Kirsti Stephens
To NRAIP 20/7/09 10:54AM

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.

I am concerned that this will lead to many more women choosing to free birth which will compromise heir babies and their own lives. Australia is not a third world and we don't want to increase our maternal and perinatal mortality rates. This is something you can prevent.

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 to require indemnity insurance.

Yours Sincerely,

Kirsti Stephens
Victoria