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OFFICIAL STATEMENT

MATERNITY

HAP would like to see reforms in the maternity services system in Australia, similar to that of New Zealand, where women can choose their lead maternity care provider and are eligible for free maternity care regardless of where they choose to birth, including those who wish to birth at home.

HAP echo's The Cochrane Collaboration assessment of home birth, which concluded that in terms of routine pregnancies, and provided suitably qualified persons were in attendance, it posed no greater risk than hospital birth, and usually resulted in less interventions. Women have reported feeling more relaxed in their own homes, which in turn reduces stress levels, and enhances the ease and experience of birth.

For this reason, HAP would like to see support of midwives in private practice and a review of regulations that restrict their ability to care for women who choose to birth outside of the hospital system.

Furthermore, HAP believes that ongoing support must be provided post-partum, particularly for women who have suffered birth trauma or postnatal depression. Lactation consultants should be readily available to encourage a long term breast feeding relationship, as recommended by WHO, and a review of maternity payments is necessary to reduce financial strain that can disrupt pivotal bonding time.