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Medicare for Midwives an important step forward

The passage through the Senate today of new laws giving midwives the ability to provide Medicare funded care to women as well as access to professional indemnity insurance is a significant step forward" says Associate Professor Jenny Gamble, President of the Australian College of Midwives

From 1 November this year, women will be able to choose to see a community midwife, and receive Medicare rebates for their visits to the midwife. The midwives will provide pregnancy and postnatal care in the community, and women may have the option of birth care in hospital from their chosen midwife.

The midwives will work with obstetricians, paediatricians, GPs, maternal and child health nurses and others to ensure each woman gets the care that she or her baby needs.

"We welcome Nicola Roxon's support for women to receive Medicare rebates when they choose the care of a midwife' Dr Gamble said. "Also welcome is the government's move to support midwives' access to professional indemnity insurance for the first time in many years'

Midwives have been unable to buy professional indemnity insurance since 2001.

'But we remain concerned to see that access to professional indemnity insurance becomes available for all midwives, including those providing professional care for women who choose to labour and birth at home."

"These reforms have the potential to greatly enhance women's access to primary midwifery care as the Minister intends" said Dr Gamble. "We look forward to continued discussion with the government to ensure that the regulations supporting implementation of these new laws help achieve that goal"