

Ms Claire Moore

Chair

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)  
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Dear Senator Moore

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I write to express my concern about the above bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this Australia is totally out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to choose homebirth.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this to be an unintended consequence and ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

It is completely unacceptable to remove the option of having a homebirth. If the indemnity insurance will not be subsidised then homebirth with an independent midwife should, in the very least, remain a legal option.

On a personal level, I spent much time researching all possible birthing options available to me, along with the corresponding policies and

statistics of various types of care and birthing facilities. After reviewing all, homebirth was a clear choice for our family. We paid for it ourselves. It was one of the best experiences of our lives, and the best money we ever spent.

If you take this option away will even more of my tax dollars be going towards cesareans for women who didn't really need or want one?

Don't push homebirth underground.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Harvey