

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.

Clinically, I have witnessed again and again the
benefits of midwife deliveries. Mothers
are usually empowered to take care of their new born with very little out
side
help. This is a saving for Medicare. Post natal depression is rare with
home
births because of extended family support. Again this is a saving for
Medicare.
Can things go wrong? Yes of course they can. That is what professional
indemnity insurance is all about. Mid wives need it, no different than
obstetricians.
Private midwives providing home births need cover as
well, and should fall under the single umbrella for all midwives. That
way
premiums are affordable.

The legislation must cater for home births so that
there is real choice for women.

Yours
sincerely

Ben Schutte

