

Dear Senator Moore

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

I am writing to express my concern about the above mentioned bills introduced into parliament by our National Health Minister, Nicola Roxon. I understand that these bills will provide midwives with access to the PBS and some professional indemnity support for those providing care to women giving birth in a hospital environment.

This is a wonderful incentive, however what is not so wonderful is the proposal to exclude home birth from this funding and indemnity proposal. Other nations throughout the world are way ahead of Australia in terms of their support for the safe practice of birthing in a home environment with experienced, supportive midwives in attendance. What are we doing taking this choice away from the women of Australia, many of whom live in remote parts of the country and cannot even easily get to a hospital!!?? We need a system where all consumers are treated equally with the same access to funding and insurance protection - and the freedom of CHOICE when it comes to their bodies, their babies, their families and their births.

In 2007 I birthed a beautiful, healthy baby boy at HOME with two very capable and experienced midwives in attendance. Along with a third midwife, they cared for me throughout my pregnancy and helped make the whole process of becoming a new parent a calm, wonderful, joyous experience. Along with all that experience and support they also brought continuity of care, love and understanding and we were able to establish a trusting relationship which is all so important to a woman (and her family) during this time of emotional and hormonal upheaval. It saddens me to think that I may never have the opportunity to experience a pregnancy and birth like this again, thanks to my own Government.

I believe it is a sad day when the Australian Government takes away not only a woman's freedom of choice in how she deals with her body and her birth but also a woman's choice in how she practices her professional craft as a midwife. So I ask you to please consider the pregnant and birthing women of Australia - past, present and future, and do not allow this Government to take away from us a basic right to freedom of choice of care.

Yours sincerely

Dearne Herrenberg