

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. I support a system where women and their families have a right to choose how to birth their babies and receive the type of care they desire.

I have three beautiful, healthy children. My first child was born via emergency c/section in 2003. I found this event to be one of the most traumatic I have ever experienced. Being my first time, I did not know what to expect. I felt alone, overwhelmed, out of control, powerless, and frightened. I did not experience continuity of care. Following this I was determined to do things differently next time. I engaged the services of Marie Heath, Independent Midwife, for the pregnancy care, births and post natal periods for my next two children. My daughter was a triumphant VBAC (vaginal birth after caesarean) and was a planned home birth in 2005. Thankfully, Marie's skill and care picked up that we needed to transfer to hospital and my daughter was born healthy and strong. In 2008, my second son was born beautifully at home in the water without any issue.

Despite the fact that we paid \$4000 and \$5000 out of our own pockets for the services provided by Marie, the continuity of care, love and support was invaluable. Under Marie's care I gained healing from my first experience, I felt in control and empowered.

I believe that every woman and her family should have a birth that is empowering and where she is in control, whether that be in the hospital or at home.

Yours sincerely

Johanna Reid