

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 had a home birth with my first child. I did alot of research and decided that it was the best choice for myself and my child. It was a peaceful and beautiful event. I had the support of a highly qualified midwife. I want to have the option of my second child being born at home. I want to be able to have experienced and qualified assistance by a midwife.

I am very concerned that women will birth on at home without assistance and that there will be an increase in infant and maternal deaths as a result. I find it hard to comprehend that in this day and age this archaic idea that all women will need to go tp hospital if they want qualified support during their birth is being considered.

Please make the necessary decision makers hear my voice in saying we want safe and legal options for birthing, which includes homebirth.

Yours sincerely

Terri Nicholson