

20th July 2009
Jason McIntosh

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

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.

Our second child, Walter, was birthed via a home birth with private midwives in attendance, and at no time was I concerned with my wife's or Walters' health and well being during or after the birth. With the interaction that we had with our private midwife, we understood what was happening and that we were a low risk leading into the birth. The bond that developed between mother and son in a completely natural experience is very strong.

After having our first son Edley in a hospital in Toowoomba, and having three different hospital midwives during a relative short birth, and then having to stay in hospital as if it was a "disease", feel that it took away from one of the most beautiful experiences we can have.

Yours sincerely

Jason McIntosh