

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.

Personally I cant understand how in 2010 that Women's liberation is going backwards... in the 1960's Women stood up to fight because:

1. Women weren't getting equal pay for equal work of equal value.
2. Women couldn't make decisions about their own bodies I.e. the Pill and Abortion.
3. Women couldn't work in designated 'men only' profession areas.
4. Women were being sexually harassed or abused by 'superior' males.
5. Women couldn't get into University.
6. Banks didn't loan to women if they were single.

Our parents and grandparents protested and won for women to have more rights. Why now are we going backwards? to the point my mother burnt her bra's to make sure I could have choices especially with my own body now the government is trying to take thous choices away. The choice to birth at home should be one for a mother to make not the government.

Yours sincerely

Kristin Merritt- Register Nurse