

Dear Senator Moore

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

I am very concerned that the proposed changes in legislation will mean that giving birth at home with a midwife will become an illegal practice. I have personally had two beautiful home births and was born at home myself. It is a profound and amazing experience that a minority of couples feel very passionately about. It is very important for women to have access to the support of a professional midwife who is trained to recognise deviations from the norm.

There is contemporary research to show that planned home birth with a midwife is a SAFE option. It is wrong that this choice could be taken away from Australian women and their families.

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.

Yours sincerely

Mary O'Carroll