

Cassie Hunter

16<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto: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 am writing this letter to express my concern, dismay and disappointment about the above bills. My understanding of these bills is that they 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. But fall short of providing the same access to independent midwives attending women choosing to homebirth, in effect rendering it illegal for midwives to do so.

It is this aspect of the proposed legislation that is of greatest personal concern to me I am mother to two beautiful children and we are hoping to add to our family in the near future. If these changes go ahead I will lose the basic human right to choose my home as the place of birth for my next child.

My second child Lucas was born at home, supported by my partner, and my wonderful midwife Sally. I researched and eventually chose to birth Lucas at home, due largely to my experience with my first child, Charlotte's, birth in hospital. Charlotte was born by unnecessary Caesarean Section. And it is for this reason (a previous C/section), and the fact I fall outside of the Perth Metro Area, that I do not qualify for the small number of publically funded births available to women with the Community Midwifery Program here in Western Australia.

I WILL NOT willingly choose to go to hospital for the birth of any future children I have. I resent the government making this decision for me, and unless my husband and I manage to conceive our next child by September/October this year, we will remain a 2 child family. We always planned to have 3 children.

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

Cassie Hunter  
(on behalf of Brett, Charlotte and Lucas Hunter)

*Meeting my daughter Charlotte – March 2005*



*Meeting my son Lucas – February 2008*

