

Dear Senator Moore

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

Let me first thank you for the fine work you do as a Senator. We value and appreciate your hard work.

Im pleased about the proposed changes to the above legislation and think they will make a significant difference to addressing some of the flaws in our health system. However, Im unsure if the changes to the above legislation, in conjunction with the National Registration, was deliberately orchestrated to criminalise Independent Midwifery or whether it was an oversight.

If it was an oversight I ask you to please include Independent Midwives into the legislative changes to ensure they can continue to provide their valuable service.

If however the changes are deliberately designed to criminalise Independent Midwifery, we here in Australia may fall behind the excellent progress other nations have made on the birthing scene (eg Netherlands, Canada, UK, New Zealand).

It seems to me an entire method of birthing is categorically outlawed because it is (perceived to be) inherently unsafe. If we were to say, the Caesarean Section method of birthing is to be completely outlawed because mothers and their babies have died as a result ... this would be entirely ludicrous. Why? The vast majority of Caesarean Section births are absolutely fine. In the same way, why would we categorically outlaw Independent Midwifery?

Would it be better for the community to focus on improving all methods of birth to ensure better outcomes Independent Midwifery and Caesarean Sections alike, while maintaining the dignity of choice for women?

Please let me ask a question in conclusion: What can we do to the legislation to ensure women can choose to birth at home safely with an Independent Midwife?