

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.

We have three children, the first at a hospital and the second two at home with two private practice midwives in attendance. We could not have asked for better care and a more relaxed environment with our home births. We believe we will have more children and fully intend to have them at home. Please don't force us to give birth on our own with no medical assistance (which is exactly what this Bill in its current form will do), or worse still, have to move to NZ to get the kind of care we deserve!

We ask you to seriously consider this aspect of the Bill and find a workable solution that continues to provide the choice and level of care that we come to expect from being Australian citizens.

Yours sincerely

John and Kerry Edmonds