

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. I have two children both of whom were born in hospitals. I feel I have already been missed out on birthing my children at home which was my first choice for. The cost of a private midwife is between \$3000 - \$5000 which excludes a large number of women who simply can't afford it. Both of my pregnancies were low risk and my daughters were birthed naturally I will always regret that they weren't born at home. I found the hospital experience clinical, impersonal and lacking in the wonder that is bringing a child into the world. If I have another child I am determined to birth at home as my last hospital experience was horrific. I believe that as women our job is to nurture the next generation. We are effectively shaping the future with our hands. We deserve the utmost support from our families, communities and government to ensure that we raise a generation of empowered, educated, aware children. That support should start from conception and continue throughout motherhood. I implore you to reconsider this amendment. It is basic right of a mother to be able to choose where and how to birth. Our birthing system is already extremely flawed, please don't make it worse.

Sincerely
Leah Avene