

17 June 2009  
Toni Appleby

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 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.

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 am Toni Appleby mother of 3  
Angus aged 11, Matilda aged 9 and Zac 4. I am not



for hospital birth I am not for home birth.

I am pro choice.

Both Matilda and Zac were born at home Angus was born in a

Public hospital. I have had 3 fantastic births all different and all

Our Family 15 minutes after Zac was born resting on the couch.

wonderful for there own reasons. Having had Angus in hospital and the other 2 at home I am not anti hospital but for me having my babies at home where we were all feeling very safe and secure was very important. I had faith in my midwives as we had developed a very close relationship over my pregnancy. I knew that even in the scariest parts of labour that everything would be Ok.

The midwives that I have come across who attend home births are the most professional and well-educated group of women. They build up a very special bond between you and your baby long before you baby enters the world. They know you and your baby well enough to be able to detect any issues before they arise.

Many people whom I have talked to worry about the safety aspects of birth and especially when you mention home birth. When I explain that we have oxygen, resuscitation equipment for mother and baby, medication to control bleeding. My Midwives have all been trained how to suture if needed and with all home births that have been conducted properly we have had hospital and or doctor support as a back up I would never do anything that would put either my self or my unborn child at risk. And neither would my mid wife

People believe that home birth is dangerous I would choose to argue that any birth is dangerous in fact it is one of the most dangerous things that we can do in our lives but when done with the right support it can be a beautiful and wonderful experience. For the whole family

I fear that if home birth and midwives doesn't start to receive the funding and the recognition it will move underground and that is when it becomes dangerous.

I had to fight so hard to have my third child at home I almost gave up and I am so pleased I didn't.

I don't plan on having any more children but I want to know that the option of home birth will be avable to my children when there time comes if that is their choice.

I view home birth like any alternative therapy there are lots of people who would never see a chiropractor, massage therapist, homoeopath, osteopath, naturopath, acupuncture, etc but these are accessible to everyone.

Shouldn't every woman who is about to have a baby expect that the person who is going to attend their birth is a person with whom they have built a relationship. Someone they can trust with the knowledge that the person guiding them through the birth process is some one who actually cares about them and their baby. Is some one who is going to stay with them and not go home just because their shift is over?

Or arrive just as the baby's head is to be born. This unfortunately is not the case with most of the hospital systems Birth centers are few and far between and there are even less in the country.

The continuity of family is very important. So is the involvement they are able to have in the birth process most hospitals don't recognise or allow for this. Seeing an independent midwife is not just about the birth of our babies it is about how the family unit is treated. Independent midwives do so much more than be there for the birth of the baby, they work with the whole family unit (including other siblings) to normalise birth and the birthing process.

By keeping home birth above ground you keep a very high professional standard where people are accountable for themselves and others.

Women are now scared about being pregnant and the birth process we no longer trust our selves or our bodies or what we were designed to do. These are normal fears made worse by the fact we only ever hear horror labor stories from the time we are pregnant.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter I am only a small voice but I really want to be heard for my children and my grandchildren

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Toni Appleby



Zac's first bath