

22nd July 2009
Christopher Palmer

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Moore

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

As the father of a child born at home, I have concerns about the above mentioned 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.

My son was born at home in November 2005, the birth being attended by a midwife with whom my partner had built a beautiful relationship through the 9 months of her pregnancy. Our son is healthy and happy and I cannot imagine bringing a child into the world in any way other than in my own home. It astounds me that our society is conditioned to the extent that they believe birthing in a hospital is a normal, healthy procedure.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. I feel it is unacceptable however, to **exclude homebirth** from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this, Australia is totally out of step with progressive 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.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Palmer