

Dear Senator Moore,

I write to you in my capacity as a mother of three young children, who were all delivered by midwives. My two youngest children were born in my own home, with the support and care of an independent midwife. The service that she provided during my pregnancy and labour was professional, caring and empowering.

I understand that the above-mentioned 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. I applaud this decision. However, I do not believe that it is acceptable to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement.

I understand that nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand 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 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 women (and their partners) have the right to birth their babies in their own homes, with the care and support of midwives. It is vital that all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Waters