

3 August 2009

Michael Fogarty

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: 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 am fully supportive of the above Bill's intention to provide Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

However, I wish to register my disappointment and dismay that midwives supporting women wanting a homebirth are excluded from this funding and indemnity arrangement.

I understand that if that Bill was to be passed in this form it would place Australia out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand, which support safe homebirths as an option for expectant mothers. These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. This to be an unintended consequence and I ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I would hope that Australia in the 21st century would support a system where women not only have the right to choose the type of birthing experience that they are comfortable with but can access adequate medical support to ensure that it is safe for themselves and their child. Please ensure that the Bill is amended to ensure that this is the case.

Yours sincerely

Michael Fogarty