

Dear Senator Moore,

As a first time mother I have been doing a lot of research into the birthing options that are available to me here in Victoria. Having spoken to many women in my life I found the most positive birthing experiences in my social circle have come from women who have given birth at home under the supervision of a trained midwife. I have been quite surprised by the lack of accurate information available to mothers about birthing options and the amount of negativity surrounding home births am finding myself increasingly passionate about this issue.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue, however it is not acceptable to not include homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement.

Personally I see the homebirth vs. hospital options as a natural process vs. a medical process. I think hospitals do a great job of looking after high-risk births but have serious concerns about their ability to support a natural, healthy, empowered birth process. I am concerned with the interventions that seem to be inevitable in a hospital environment and the lack of respect for women's biological processes in giving birth. It is also really important for me to have a close relationship and develop a strong level of trust with my caregiver (a private midwife) who will be with me for the entire pre-natal period and the whole birth process. I don't like the idea of having guidance from a random midwife, nurse or doctor who may happen to be working the shift that I go into labour and may or may not be there for the entire labour period. For these reasons I am choosing a homebirth.

I am quite shocked about the lack of information available to women in relation to birth options and frightened by the way in which our country treats women in labour and measures birth outcomes. I find the rates of induced labour, c-sections, use of epidurals and other interventions very frightening as these rates are considered healthy and are believed to create safer environments in which to bring our babies into the world. I am aware that Australia is really backwards in relation to the way in which birth is such a hospitalised process in our country, particularly in comparison to New Zealand and the U.K.

I feel very strongly about women being able to choose the way in which they want to give birth and think it is really important for women in Australia to have homebirths as an option available to them. I guess the main issue to me is that I see birth as a very personal, amazing, empowering experience and am very concerned to think that during such an important time for us,

women may be losing the ability to choose how they want to manage their birth process and who we want to support us in such an important time in our lives.

I ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

Yours sincerely,

Nerissa Broben