

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.

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.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

As a Mother of 2 sons who were both born at home in the presence of 2 VERY professional and experienced midwives (over 20 years experience) I must say that I am outraged at the possibility of Homebirth being unavailable to others in Australia. This is a direct threat to the freedom inherent in all people to choose their own birthing experience.

If midwives in private practice are no longer able to provide their service

to families who would like a homebirth, many of these people will
continue
to birth at home, without a professional present and without the
expertise
and equipment available if required.

I appreciate your consideration of my letter and know that I speak on
behalf
of many others who have been unable to send in letters.

Kind Regards,

Ember Fairbairn-Ramsay