

Dear Senator Moore

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

I am writing because I have heard of the above bills and wish to express my support for Midwives and concern about the exclusion of homebirth from the funding and indemnity to be covered in the bills.

I have had personal experience of birthing in both hospitals and with an independent midwife at home. At the time I made the decision to birth my third child at home, I analysed the statistics on home birth and discovered that home births have the best outcomes for both mother and child of any birthing process used in Australia. And yet I was strongly condemned, in writing, by my (former) obstetrician for my decision. He delivered my first child by caesarean, declaring my pelvis "incompetent" and unable to deliver. This was wrong. I birthed my second child vaginally, against his wishes, and my third child at home, with an independent midwife. The experience was emotionally healing and helped cement my faith in myself as a mother and heal the trauma of my original caesarean.

The inclusion and support of homebirths under funding and insurance arrangements is reasonable from a medical point of view, and I believe completely practical from a supply perspective as well. We hear of soaring Obstetric bills and shortages, especially in the bush. Independent Midwives can fill the gap both in cities and in more remote areas. Their exclusion is ludicrous - cutting off our noses to spite our faces. It is bowing to the pressure of the medical fraternity in a move that will disadvantage the women who are having the babies by removing their right to choose a home birth as I did. This right has been granted in many other progressive countries, including England, Holland and New Zealand - should we cross the Tasman to deliver the way we wish to?

I strongly urge you to support independent Midwives for home births - to register, to be insured, to access funding. It's our right as mothers.

Yours sincerely

Sue Moorhen