

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.

If the above bills are not amended to INCLUDE homebirth, my right to choose to birth my babies in the safety of my home (as I did with my second child) will be taken away from me. This will leave me with only two options:

1. Freebirth without a midwife present, essentially putting myself and my baby at risk, OR
2. Leave Australia and move to a country which values a woman's right to choose during one of the most important events in her life, giving birth.

Apart from my right to choose, I don't understand why homebirth is not funded and an elective caesarian section (for no medical reason) is

funded? The latter places more pressure on the medical system and costs tax payers more money than a homebirth. It all seems very back the front to me! Having said this, however, it's not about where a woman births her child, but about her right to choose! Please don't let a woman's right to choose be taken from her.....please don't take my right to choose away from me!

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Yours sincerely and with hope that the inclusive amendment will be made

Kylie Richter-Cools