

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.

There is so much to say on the matter of homebirth and birth choices in general for women in Australia, too much to cover in a few lines. What I will say is that I had a 'emergency' c-section with my first child, in a public hospital. It would have cost the government tens of thousands of dollars, as patients we did not pay a cent. It was a horrible experience, being passed from this doctor to that, seeing 8 midwives come on and go off shift through out labour. I recieved no post natal care once leaving the hospital due to living in the country. For the birth of our second child we chose to employ an independent midwife and birth at home. We paid her from our own pocket, no government funding needed. Having our baby at home meant that i was not clogging up the already over-full hospital system, leaving beds for people who actually needed them. The level of care we recieved during pregnancy, labour and

afterwards far, far exceeded that which I received from the hospital system. I was cared for, nurtured and encouraged, everything I needed to birth my baby safely and hassle-free. My homebirth experience with our professional midwife is something we as a family will always treasure and I will certainly be having my next child at home with a midwife.

If you vote to pass this Bill, you will be forcing women into the hospital system to birth their babies. The opportunity to birth safely at home will be lost. Please, I urge you, do not take away Australian women's right to make their own birth choices.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Wilson