

Dear Senator Moore,

It is terrific that the Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills are looking at Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives who care for women giving birth in hospital.

I just can't understand why homebirth is being excluded from this funding and indemnity arrangement. So many other countries in the world support homebirth and make it a viable, healthy, safe option for parents. This is our chance to do the same.

All the statistics show that hospitals are breeding grounds for infections. There is a tremendous amount of information from countries such as the UK and Netherlands showing that home birth is ultimately safer for mother and child. Additionally, hospital beds are at a premium and should be reserved for women with health issues. Giving birth is not an illness. It has its risks, but these can be minimalised and regulated if homebirth is included in legislation. Putting healthy women in hospital actually increases their health risks.

There is also an emotional/mental health issue involved. The transition from giving birth to parenting is made clumsy and difficult by the move from hospital to home. I have given birth twice in hospital and wish I could have instead been in my home with proper support.

A consequence also of the introduction of these bills is the intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals, which will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. Please take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I really think all mothers should be supported in their right to give birth in the way they want, in the environment that makes them comfortable as well as safe.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Mrs Klay Lamprell