

Dear Senator Moore

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

I am writing to express my family's concern about the above bills which seek to treat health consumers with inequality. While 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, they do not allow for homebirth as an insured and supported care option. If a woman can choose a surgical delivery (at great expense to the health system) she should also have the option of choosing to give birth at home (at considerably less cost to tax payers).

I gave birth to my first child at Hornsby Hospital. It was a very straight forward birth with no need at all for any of the services provided at the hospital. The only negative memories that I have of my son's birth were to do with the hospital setting and the care I was given there. This included fighting off intervention, every step of the way, throughout what was a very straight forward birth. Childbirth is an incredibly intimate family experience. Midwives deal with vaginas every day of the week but MY vagina is not dealt with every day of the week and the complete loss of modesty in a hospital setting was particularly upsetting.

I went on to have my second and third child in the private, familiar and comfortable surrounds of home in Turrumurra with the professional care and support of an independent midwife, Akal Khalsa. My daughter Harlow was born in the bath after a fast a furious labour and my husband caught her. No one was shouting at me or suggesting a forceps delivery. My third child, another girl, was also born at home, on our big bed into the loving arms of her dad and our midwife again gave us personal, professional care.

My concern is that if homebirth is no longer a legal option in Australia, many mothers will birth at home anyway, unassisted by trained professionals and that this may have very poor outcomes for their babies.

I believe that 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.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Perry