

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.

I was booked in at the Birth centre of the Royal Women's Hospital for the birth of my daughter. When I was in labor I went to the hospital expecting to deliver soon. The midwife on duty examined me and thought that I came in too early and sent me back home. I ended up having an unassisted birth alone at home with my partner. Luckily everything went ok and the next day we called in a homebirth midwife to assist us. If I ever have another child I rather have an unassisted homebirth instead of a hospital birth!! I would recommend this every one even first time mothers as the quality of care is just so much better.

Your name

Yours sincerely

Lisa Steiner