

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.

After an upsetting and disappointing medicalised birth last year, I am thrilled to have my daughter but determined to do it differently next time. I am among a growing group of educated, intelligent and informed women whose research shows us that a properly supervised home birth attended by a qualified midwife is every bit as safe as and often less traumatic than many hospital births.

Removing the option for the attendance by midwives at home births will not stop women birthing at home, as many feel passionately that this is the

best option for them and their babies. It will, though, deprive them of the vital safety net that makes home birth such a great option right now.

Are you prepared to put women's lives and their babies' wellbeing at risk by supporting this bill?

Yours sincerely

Tine Brok