

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 TOTALLY support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

I have four grandchildren, one of whom was born at home with two loving midwives in attendance, as well as my son. My daughter in law is also studying midwifery and has attended many births in hospital. This is one of the reasons they chose homebirth; it being a much more loving and relaxed environment, whilst still being totally professional, and this assisted the mother to deal with the stresses of labour. IT IS THEIR RIGHT TO CHOOSE.

Please do not allow this bill to exclude homebirth cover.

Yours sincerely

Robyn Snedden