

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 come from a community of friends who all had babies delivered at home. I would want this same choice for my two grown up children. We find it incredible that such a right can be taken from us in a time where social and community development should be opening up not closing down back to a old system. In our town they are closing our local maternity unit in the local hospital so not only will we not be able to birth at home but we will have to travel one and a half hours to a huge city hospital to birth our children.

Please see some reason and include the right for registered midwives to receive prof indemnity in this bill.

Yours sincerely

Rachel and Glenn Benmayor, Cathy Griffith Fiona Oliver, Julia Reeve,
Julia Ryan

Chiaki Hashimoto Kerree Clarke, Kay Self,

Allegra Benmayor Genaro Benmayor