

Dear Senator Moore

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

My wife has given birth to our 3 daughters (aged 6, 3 and 1) at home and this would not have been possible without our experienced, caring and professional midwives in Private Practice. My wife and I made the choice to birth at home as we believe child birth is a natural process that generally needs NO intervention. Hospitals and Doctors are a great resource for complicated birth deliveries, but to lump every birth as 'complicated' is stretching the truth.

Furthermore pregnancy and birth are not an illness. By outlawing homebirth practice you take away valid choices for women and a chance to birth naturally without intervention. Childbirth in a hospital is treated like an illness. While there are some exceptionally talented midwives in hospitals, by and large the birthing process is considered as a timed mechanical process and this leads to unnecessary intervention that creates complications in the newborn and mother in the first 12 months of the birth. Please don't be fooled by the statistics from the Australian Medical Association on childbirth. There are more rates of complications due to intervention than is reported (for example the definition of complication in childbirth in a hospital contradicts practices in other countries like The Netherlands and New Zealand). We had three healthy babies born at home, I would hate to see my children's choices of childbirth limited by this bill. If this bill passes women will still have births at home with or without support. Do the right thing and vote the bill down.

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.

Yours sincerely

Tony Keeble