

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. Please ensure our democratic right to make our own health care decisions is upheld. Freedom to choose our own midwife and birth at home is something that women in many other countries enjoy; Australian families should be able to access the same legislative rights.

I have experienced two planned homebirths with the expert care of two incredibly dedicated midwives. My children entered the world in a safe and secure environment and I was attended to with a high level of care. I had the utmost trust in my care providers and should I have more children I wish to have the choice to stay at home again under the same type of care. I was extremely dissatisfied by the level of care provided by the hospital I attended where I had my first child. The home birth midwives provide a

most invaluable service to women and this should be accessible in Australia.

Yours Sincerely,

Catherine Swansborough