

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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.

On a personal note, I have had the privilege of Midwife care for two successful home water births. They were two beautiful and peaceful births for my sons. We are educated professionals who researched birthing and its long term effects on health individuals in our society. I am also a Midwife who works in our less than admirable public health system. These are the two reasons we chose to have home births. If all you want is a normal and natural vaginal birth for your baby, statistically the only choice is a home birth. I would have personally paid anything for a home birth, if I had to. I didn't ask any money from the government to do so. I plead with you, to not take away my choice to home birth. If you do, what is that saying about how our government views women's choice? If you do, then women (like myself) will birth at home, without professional care and if any problems do occur, because you made it illegal for home birth Midwives to practice, then I will be demanding the government to pay for any ill outcomes because of this occurrence (as has occurred).

Yours sincerely

Aristea Porfiri