

8th JULY 2009

Lisa Cohen

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Moore

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

I am an Australian citizen who a year ago gave birth to my first child in the UK where I was, at that time, resident. I was not only legally able to have a homebirth, but actually encouraged by the NHS midwives to do so. To add to that, to have a homebirth in the UK is 100% funded by the NHS – completely free of charge.

I find it shocking to come back to Australia and find that the attitudes surrounding childbirth are so medicalised and freedom of choice is simply not supported.

I was sad to discover that should I want a home birth for a second child here in Australia I would have to go private and pay thousands of dollars for that right.. That it itself feels like a huge inequity in maternal care.

Now to have even that choice taken away compels me to write to you today to voice my opinion.

It is our freedom as women to choose how we want to birth our children and indeed where we want to birth our children.

I believe it is a fundamental Human Right...indeed the most basic of Human Rights.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Cohen