

9th July 2009
Kevin and Lowanna Doye

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 write to express my concern about the above bills. We had two children at home using homebirth midwives and would never chose to have another child in hospital. Having a supported homebirth made it an incredibly simpler event than it would have been having the babies in hospital and saved the health service two beds at a time when I know money is stretched. We have friends from the Netherlands where home birth is the norm and fully supported.

We were not sick and did not need to go to hospital – we were just birthing our babies in our supported home environment. We would absolutely do so again and would love, of course, to have midwifery support. We paid for the midwife at each birth out of the baby money – there was no burden on the health service. Please don't take our support away from us.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable 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

Kevin and Lowanna Doye