

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.

I am a mother of a three year old child. He was born in a birth centre because I could not afford a homebirth. Though it was a great birth, our separation straight after has made me determined to have any other children at home. I don't care what it will cost. My children deserve to have their mother birth in dignity, privacy and supported in a way that can only be achieved at a homebirth, supported by Independent Midwives.

The thought that this right might be taken away, that I will be seen as involved in a criminal act, that my support people can be de-registered and fined is abhorrent to me. This is supposed to be a democracy, a free country, yet we are about to have our right to freedom of choice taken away.

My grandmothers fought for the rights of women. Over 100 years of gains made by the women's movement stand to be brushed aside by this legislation. It is MY body, MY right and MY choice to birth where and with whom I want. This misogynistic legislation is a huge backward step for Australia. It puts us with countries like the United States, which are one of the worst for mother and baby morbidity and mortality.

I strongly urge you to stand up for women and their children and families and protect independent midwifery as an option for birth.

Yours Sincerely,

Jessica Krop

