

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.

My two children (Luke 11 and Malia 8) were both born at home. Beautiful, peaceful and empowering experiences that I will treasure all my life. I understand that homebirth isn't for everyone, but making it unavailable will only lead to unsafe and possibly disastrous outcomes in the cases where people choose to go ahead unsupported. Please make wise decisions about supporting women's rights to choose where they give birth. I can't imagine living in a society that wouldn't support the simple and safe way that I chose to give birth to my children, with a midwife in my own home.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Crawford