

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 gave birth at home in 2001 to an 8 pound six ounces baby girl in water with a registered homebirth midwife. I was so happy to give birth and unless I was at risk I would not give birth in a hospital. Birth at home is quiet, private, safe and sacred with a registered midwife. My daughter is now 8 and I would like to have another baby at home next year. There is no way I will go to a hospital as these places can do so many unnecessary procedures to women and babies. I have worked as a Doula (birth attendant) and have seen the brutality and rushed manner that births are treated in most hospitals. It is a travesty and tragedy that this is the case.

Homebirth is safe for low risk pregnancies and 95% are low risk. Hospitals are for sick and dying people. Pregnant women no longer need to birth with fear of being augmented, sliced open, cut or have their babies pulled or vacuumed out.

Homebirth will always be my number one choice. I support Homebirth midwives, their skill, intuition and courage. It is a woman's right to birth where, how and with whom she chooses. This is indeed a human right. Babies also deserve to be born without fear and violence. I will give birth at home next year and do not want to do so without a registered homebirth midwife to birth safely. You must ensure I can do this safely by making homebirth a legal choice for me and my midwife.

Yours sincerely

Angela Fitzgerald