

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 believe in the rights of all people, the freedom of choice we have in this country is a precious status.

My three children where all born at home in the 80's in the Darling Downs region and it was carried out RESPONSIBLY.

I was attended by one (and with my last baby, two midwives) and my GP. I thought carefully about where I would birth and was supported by my husband with these choices. It saddens me to think that my children, if they choose to give birth, will have no option but to attend a hospital. There isn't even enough Birthing Suites in this country to cater for all who could use them. To think that they might not enjoy a continuity of care with one on one midwifery care in the comfort of their own homes is a sad realization.

Yours sincerely

Maryanne

