

Dear Senator Moore

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I was born at home 60 years ago, it was common practice and was a sensible approach to a natural part of life. I have watched in horror at the continued medicalisation of childbirth - the stripping away of a woman's right to be in charge of how her body gives birth. And now I hear that there is a proposal to withhold medicare support for bills incurred if a woman, quite rightly, chooses to have her baby outside a hospital - a place for sick people. And withholding the ability for well trained midwives and nurse practitioners to have access for the appropriate professional indemnity should they choose to aid a woman in carrying out her choice.

I find this out and out discrimination - surely all consumers should have the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

It is not acceptable to exclude homebirth from funding and indemnity. 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 ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

Yours sincerely

Shiona Pearson