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, both as a mother and a studying Midwife. 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 who are providing progressive and comprehensive healthcare choices to all birthing women and their families.

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. It is common and deemed as safe and normal in the UK to birth at home. Why can we not accept this to be so here?

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 veinly hope that this is not due to the historical oppositional context of obstetrics practices VS midwifes traditional knowledge. Midwifery University courses are comprehensive and challenging, fully equipping midwifes to work in conjunction with doctors, nurses and obstetricians as a woman-focussed team, in order to deliver safe home birth to all who desire it.

I urge you, please reconsider!!!

Yours sincerely

Inkah Fischer