

8th July 2009
On behalf of Beale family

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

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.

Every woman every choice. We live in a democratic society; every woman should have a choice about where they choose to birth their unborn child. I urge you to take every available step to pass this bill and keep homebirth legal. My third pregnancy was going to be a homebirth until I miscarried with our own known midwife, I do hope that when I fall pregnant again I will be able to under take a homebirth. And not committing an illegal act just to birth my unborn child. In my home safely with my family surrounding me! My body, my choice.

Yours sincerely

Your name

Sarah Beale (Mrs)