

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 am pregnant with my first child and want to believe I am fortunate to live in a society offering choices to where I can birth my child; and the sanctuary of my own home being one of them. Birthing is not a new medical condition but a privilege women worldwide have been privy to since the start of time and forever going forward. A woman should be able to choose a safe environment to have her child knowing that specialist care, and in this instance by homebirth midwives, will be provided and supported.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

Yours sincerely

Monique Goldsworthy