

Dear Senator Moore,

I had a homebirth last year. It was beautiful, safe, empowering and legal. My midwife came to me in case there were any problems, there wasn't. This model is used all over the world and produces great outcomes. Why is it that the Australian government is proposing a bill that will make homebirth unsafe, as we will not be able to have registered midwives attend our births. This is unsafe. I refer you to the recent coroner who pleaded with our government to ammend this legislation to include homebirth midwifery. Homebirths will not stop. I am planning a homebirth for my next baby. Whether it will be a safe one is up to our government. When we say that a registerd midwife cannot attend a homebirth because she is not indemnified, we are saying midwife, call yourself a birth support coach, or something similar. You are in effect taking the hand of the registration boards off the whole issue. Anyone will be able to attend births as 'birth support'...no one will know who is a midwife and they will not be registered, so there is no way to take away someone's registration in the case of negligence. It's totally de-reglifying the whole situation. I know this was not the intent of the bills. I urge you to reconsider and include midwives for Insurance and medicare for homebirth.

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.

Yours sincerely

Penny Shilling