

Dear Senator Moore

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

I am writing to express my views regarding the above bills that would lead to homebirth becoming effectively illegal. I am the fortunate father of two beautiful girls Althea and Abigale who were born in the exquisite intimacy of our family home. Who has the right to tell a family that they cannot choose to welcome their expectant baby into the safety, intimacy and familiarity of their own home? Homebirth is important and worth saving.

Contrary to the suggestions of the report the number of women choosing to birth at home is NOT insignificant and their welfare cannot be simply dismissed. It is incredible that despite NO commonwealth support and NO indemnity insurance for supporting midwives that still more than 6000 women choose to birth at home each year. 53 percent of the consumer submissions made in response to the report discussed homebirth. This clearly indicates the significance of the issue for the Australian public!

Furthermore the sole justification given for the proposed changes to homebirth midwifery care is that incorporating homebirth risks polarising the professions rather than allowing the expansion of collaborative approaches to improving choice and services for Australian women and their babies. Such simplistic thinking scarcely deserves reply. How does homogenising the opinions and scope of birth supporting professionals do anything to expand choices and services? Of what value is a so-called collaboration without incorporating and indeed fostering a diversity of perspectives, choices and approaches?

Increasingly an unfair pressure is placed upon medical professionals with so many people pushing onto these service providers the responsibility for their own health and well being. Besides from the cost of indemnity the sad consequences of this are expensive, interventionalist and often traumatic medical practice. That is why it is so refreshing and inspiring that each year more than 6000 courageous and inspiring women in this country, with the support of their equally inspiring birth attendants, friends and family, choose to take 100% responsibility for their birth outcomes. So passionate and trusting are the midwives who attend these births that for the last 7 years they have done so without any indemnity insurance whatsoever. Their courage is humbling and their trust and vision is truly uplifting. Why is our government not supporting such positive initiatives?

I ask you personally to please take this opportunity to claim on behalf of all Australians the fundamental human right for women to choose where and with whom they give birth.

Yours sincerely

Luke Yates