

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.

Our first child was born in 2005 at home through the Community midwifery programme in Fremantle W.A. This experience for us birthing our first child was a wonderful experience, we knew our midwife throughout and by time the birth came around she was considered a friend which made the whole birthing experience easier as both my husband and I knew and trusted her. The most wonderful part of the whole experience was waking up in the morning after a couple of hours sleep and looking round in bed to find my child and my husband asleep next to me and thinking here is our family all together as it should be, it still makes me cry to think about it.

I am now expecting my second child, after 2 years of trying and one successful IVF attempt. I would like to have that wonderful experience again however this time it is not so easy in Gerringong, NSW. The recently started community midwifery homebirth programme through Wollongong hospital is already full therefore if I want to have a Homebirth which I am entitled to have I have to use a private midwife. If this was the case in a years time, this choice would be illegal and I would be forced to either birth at home with no midwife, which is as you will agree very dangerous or have my baby in hospital against my will.

My husband is a builder and Tafe teacher and I am an ex paramedic, we are not crazy hippies, we just want birth to be as special as it can be for us and our family. If we can choose to pay for a private obstetrician and a cesarean then why do we not have the choice to pay for an experienced midwife and a natural homebirth providing we are a low risk birth. People like us dont want to put ourselves or our children in danger we just want the support that we would receive in other countries.

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

Lizz Gerlowska, Brett McCroary, Seth McCroary and the bump