

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.

I have one 3 ½ year old son and am expecting another baby in December this year.

Although I would not have chosen to give birth at home to my first child for and may not have chosen a homebirth for my second baby for personal & financial reasons I believe very strongly that women should have the right to choose their preferred method of birthing.

After giving birth myself I now realize how important it is that a woman know her birth attendant(s) prior to going into labour and have the

freedom to give birth in an environment that minimizes fear and anxiety as much as possible. I don't believe that a hospital environment is always the calm & stress free environment that women really need to help them give birth. I understand that there are times where a hospital birth is vital for the safe delivery & health of mother and baby. Women should have the right to make an informed choice.

Yours sincerely

Brigid Collaery