

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 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 UK 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 am a midwife. To become a midwife I completed a three year course to become a registered nurse before undertaking a twelve month course to become

a midwife. This was between 1969 until 1974. I then worked in many areas of nursing before coming back to midwifery in 1989

During my career I have undertaken courses in Child and family Health, Lactation, Reflexology, Advanced skills and attended countless workshops,

educational forums and conferences. I have carried the cost of this to ensure I am the best midwife I can be. In my hospital work I spend 90% of my time in

Birthing Unit.

Twelve years ago I combined my hospital work with a private homebirth practice. Only then did I truly learn about birth as I supported and cared for women

and their families in their homes.

I am disappointed, saddened and infuriated that this option is even being considered to be taken away from a minority group. Women have a right to choose

where and with whom they birth

Midwifery is my career, from next July it is a very real possibility that I will no longer be able to legally practice in a homebirth setting. I have done absolutely

nothing illegal or negligent in my practice. Why do I bother? In my years of working in a hospital I have seen women often treated appallingly.

They are often so intimidated by the system. I stay to try and make a difference.

To lose the joy of homebirth, to see the positive effect it has on families, breastfeeding and parenting would be a complete travesty of justice.

Significant reforms of Australia's maternity care system will always provoke protest, threats and predictions of disaster by extreme medical voices. You have

to wonder why when it is contrary to available evidence. These reforms include normalizing midwives access to public funding and insurance and women's

access to options including homebirth.

It appears that the reviewers have conceded to fear of these medical voices over the interests of women. You will not stop homebirth but by effectively stopping

women being able to birth with a known midwife in the setting she is happy with you are setting Australia on an unsafe path - the very thing you are trying to avoid

Yours sincerely

Betty Vella