

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 had a very traumatic hospital birth with my first child. I was induced unnecessarily which lead to an avalanche of other medical interventions, culminating in an emergency c-section which I didn't want - but was given no other choice - to have. I suffered post-traumatic stress and depression after this that went undiagnosed. When I fell pregnant with my second child 18 months later, the previous trauma began to re-surface. I knew I wanted to have a natural birth with my second baby but the hospital was deeming me as 'high risk' just because I had a c-section scar. 'High risk' meant lots of monitoring and medical interventions during the birth and I feared this would take me down the track I'd already been. I could not do that again.

I then hired a private midwife and my healing began. She helped me and my husband to process all the fears and trauma we felt with our daughter's birth and in doing this, freed us to concentrate on our pregnancy with our second child. She helped me realise that my body was made to birth and that I could do it; she gave me time, something no other doctor or

midwife had given me before either because they were understaffed and stressed out or simply because they didn't believe it was important. Quite simply, she restored my faith in my self.

An added benefit with our private midwife was that we were able to have all our pre-natal visits in the comfort of our own home. My daughter was present through them all and even had the chance to hear her own baby brother's heartbeat while he was still in my belly. She is 5 now and still recalls the times she heard his heartbeat while he was on the inside! Needless to say, I went on to have a wonderful, natural birth and I firmly believe this would not have been possible without the support of my midwife. The physical care she gave me during my pregnancy was secondary to the emotional support I got from her. It truly, truly healed me.

I will not be having any more children but I want my daughter to have the CHANCE to choose to birth at home or at the very least, have the chance to hire her own midwife to support her during her pregnancy and when she births in hospital. I want her to experience the sheer joy and power of birthing as nature intended and I believe the best way to achieve this is with the support of a private midwife. Please do not take this opportunity away from Australian women.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards

Renee Lunder