

Dear Senator Moore

I was one of the hundreds of women who wrote a submission to the recent Maternity Services Review asking for improvement to the accessibility of homebirth with an independent midwife. What I specifically wanted to see was Medicare funding for IMs, as I know that for many women, the expense is prohibitive.

I was utterly shocked and devastated to receive such a slap in the face when the results of the review were released. Not only is Medicare funding NOT being made available for homebirths, but now the very existence of independent midwifery is under threat.

So it's with a heavy heart that I am writing this -- ANOTHER submission to ANOTHER inquiry affecting birth and midwifery in Australia -- to ask you to PLEASE consider the needs and wants of ALL birthing women, not just the majority who choose to birth within the medical model.

I shouldn't have to justify this request, but here are a few salient points:

- \* One-to-one midwifery care is the recognised GOLD standard model of care for pregnant women all around the world. Independent midwives provide this model of care.
- \* Homebirth has been proven, time and time again, to be AS SAFE as birth in hospital.
- \* It is well-known that the high rate of routine interventions performed in hospitals is tantamount to a health crisis in Australia.
- \* Our caesarean rate is deplorable at 31%, 2-3 times higher than the rate deemed necessary by the World Health Organisation for ANY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, let alone a developed nation. Since this means that 50-67% of all caesareans performed are unnecessary, it is more important than ever that homebirth be recognised and promoted as a safe alternative to the medical model.
- \* The amount of money Medicare could save by funding homebirth with independent midwives should be obvious to everyone (since caesareans alone cost more than double the amount most IMs charge, not to mention all the other costly and unnecessary interventions performed routinely in hospitals).
- \* Safe, empowering homebirths lead to better long-term health outcomes, such as reduced rates of PND and PTSD, greater breastfeeding success rates, and fewer ongoing complications related to surgery and other interventions.

On a personal level, I have given birth in hospital once and will never do it again. It was the worst, most traumatic and devastating experience of my life. The possibility that I will be forced to go back there to give birth -- an event I consider the most special, sacred and important to me personally -- leaves me almost breathless with terror.

Please don't do this to me. Please don't do it to any woman.

Please do whatever is required to reverse the direction in which this legislation is taking Australia -- a supposedly free, progressive nation -- and allow independent midwifery to not only survive, but thrive.

Yours sincerely,  
Natalie McQueen