

Dear Senator Moore,

\*Re: \*\*Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills\*

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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.

/My first child was born at home in a peaceful setting, with the assistance of our independent midwife. My second child was born by ceasarian section in hospital. My homebirth experience far exceeded my expectations and we have a happy healthy and calm boy. This would not have been possible without our midwife. While grateful for the safe delivery of my daughter in hospital, it is an experience I would rather avoid next time around. At a time when we should be supporting more woman to birth at home by choice, thus freeing up precious resources in the health system, this legislation will inadvertently exclude independent midwife's from practicing. Please do not allow these woman with vast experience to be prevented from doing what they do best. Please give educated women a choice to birth with whom they choose./

Yours sincerely

Wendy Holtby