

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 gave birth to my first daughter at home safely in 2001 in the company of two midwives and a doctor. I was fully aware of the pros and cons for home birth and made an educated choice based on rigorous research. I ensured that I was provided care that would allow me to feel relaxed in the knowledge that I would be looked after with first quality care. My experience was one which brought me and my family great joy.

My second birth was in hospital due to the prohibitive cost of having a home birth. Both experiences were comparable in the standard of care. I feel strongly that all women should be able to have the choice for a well informed homebirth with appropriate care if they so choose.

Yours sincerely

Defah Dattner