

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.

Birthing a child is a life changing event in a woman's life, she needs to be able to birth where she feels most safe and private. For many women this place is at home. My son was born in a hospital birth centre and over all it was a very satisfying experience that I will treasure, however, I had to fight for the birth I wanted. I would like to birth my next child at home with a trained midwife and my partners support. I don't think government should limit the choices available to women and where they want to birth their children. The craft of midwifery will be lost by limiting midwifery to hospital and obstetric driven models of care. Intervention rates (i.e. induction/ forceps and vacuum delivery/ caesarean rates are at the highest ever in history. One can note the rates of post-natal depression rising at the same rates as the interventions; therefore linking a woman's birthing experience with her coping mechanisms following the birth of her child. Taking home birth ! off the agenda for midwives and birthing women is taking womens rights back to the dark ages. It should also be noted that a homebirth costs approximately \$4000.00 and a hospital birth from \$5000.00 up to \$30,000 plus depending on the interventions and length of stay. It is true that the home birth community is small, but it is growing and has many supporters. Women are reclaiming their power to go within and birth their babies in a gentle, non-violent way. Please consider not only the women in this, but also the babies, that are born everyday around the world in their homes, into the safe and loving hands of a trained and known midwife.

Yours sincerely,

Kylee Baker