

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 am actually in disbelief that I am even having to write a letter such as this. Taking away a person's right to chose something as basic as giving birth at home with an independent midwife seems like we are going backwards as far as one's rights and freedom goes. If there are concerns about safety then homebirth statistics should speak for themselves and as far as I am concerned there is no evidence to prove that homebirthing is a dangerous practice, instead it is shown to be just as safe, if not more so, as birthing in a hospital. So why try to fix or change something that is not broken?

Yours sincerely

Deanna Jarrett