

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Dear Senator Moore

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

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I am writing 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 work as a private birth support person, and I have been inundated with calls from families in distress about the possibility of not being able to have a home birth in the future.

The stats show that home birth, with the support of a trained midwife is as safe, if not more safe that a hospital birth.

If this bill is passed, then it will force women, who would have elected to have a SAFE midwife supported home birth, to give birth at home on their own... THAT makes home birth unsafe!!!! If the Australian government take the choice of having a home birth away from us (women of Australia) they will be taking away a BASIC human right.

We have giving birth at home through the ages, with the support of experienced women in the community, what right does the government have to take that option away from us!?? Imagine how your grandmother and her grandmother would feel about this!! AND imagine how your daughter, and her daughter would feel when they no longer have the right to choose where and with whom they give birth!

Yours sincerely

Carly Wemyss