

13/7/09

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

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.

My partner and I are planning to start a family in the next couple of years. We have always assumed that we will our babies at home. We were shocked and very disappointed to hear that this may not be possible. We are seriously considering trying to have our first baby now before these bills come into affect so we can choose a homebirth. This put us under a lot of pressure to make this decision quickly and hope that we can get pregnant soon. Having the choice to have a homebirth has always been something I have taken for granted; I have seen many of my friends have their children at home. To think I will not have this choice is very disempowering and disheartening, I feel it is a basic right that has been taken from me.

Yours sincerely

Nerida Jamieson