

12.07.09

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: 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 first son Oliver was born in the peaceful and calm environment of my home, there were no interferences or distractions so the birth went smoothly and he was born into a calm and loving environment. When I am pregnant again I will choose this option to birth my child, if the legislation changes this will not impact my decision it will only means that the beautiful mid-wife that I shared my journey with the first time will not, by law be present. What a sad sad shame, the most important person for any birthing woman the mid-wife, and they have been outlawed to do what they have been trained to do, and that is to assist a woman during her birth. Please Please reconsider our nation health scheme and give women the freedom to choice their birthing journey, what are going to be the consequences if you change the law?

Yours sincerely
Christie Roxburgh