

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009

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.

I have two children my first was born in hospital because I was unable to afford a private midwife to attend me at home. My experience in hospital was not a memorable one & so for the birth of my second child I decided to use a private midwife for pre-natal care & to attend the birth at my home.

The thought of birthing in a hospital or even a birthing centre was actually a matter of distress to me, so I could not imagine what not having a CHOICE would be like...

Giving birth is a major event in a women's life & I like to think I live in a country that is not in the dark ages when it comes to women's rights, Australian women should have the right to choose the safest way to birth her baby, and with the support, knowledge and experience of a qualified private midwife. My homebirth was the best experience, not just for me & my new baby but my entire family, and should I become pregnant again I would not even think twice about it: I would want my pre-natal care with an independent midwife & to birth my baby at home.

Yours sincerely

Natalie Grant