

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.

I feel very saddened by the threat that women across our beautiful country will never feel the immense joy I felt giving birth to my daughter (a 7 pound baby girl just as my midwife had told me!)

in the amazing hands of a competent, nurturing midwife safely arriving into a loving room full of family. Instead will be forced into situations like my second birth (unable to afford the homebirth option!!) in hospital on a cold floor in the hands of an incompetent obstetrician. Finally giving birth posterior (I guess he missed that tiny detail..) to my daughter...feeling disheartened and disappointed she didn't have the opportunity to enter the world like her sister!

Please debate with your heart in this matter as it is the single most significant day in a women's life.

Yours sincerely

Your name
Rebecca Cunningham