

Debbie Hodgson

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
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Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

Dear Senator Moore,

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 had my first baby in hospital, and now that I know more about birth I feel that my second baby could have a gentler entry into the world if she was born at home in a relaxed, uninhibited environment, with fewer invasive technologies. I am looking forward to birthing at home at the end of this year. I'm totally devastated to think that my younger sister and friends will not have the free choice that I have. I just wanted to register my voice as a plea for the continuing place of homebirth in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Hodgson