

14/7/2009

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.

My partner and I are expecting our first child in November and it is a very special time in both of our lives. I am originally from New Zealand where we would be totally covered with regards to funding for a homebirth midwife. For us though the money isn't the issue but the principal that a government is willing to cut out the choice for responsible aware mothers to bring their babies into a loving, homely and safe space at home. Making it affectively illegal for mothers to have a midwife at their homebirths is totally wrong and against all human instincts and morals. If this issue is over insurance (money based around fear) then I feel that you as the senator need to take a look at what is really important here; money or those countless future little cherubs?

Yours sincerely

Bernie Gunn