

Kathryn Williams

15 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 am currently 37 weeks pregnant and being cared for by an independent midwife. The care I have received is of the highest standard and I would not imagine choosing any other model of care. It is extremely important to me to have the choice of homebirth. It is ridiculous that the government would make it illegal for me to access a registered midwife to assist me to birth at home. This situation must be resolved before the supposedly progressive legislation makes it impossible for me to access this basic human right.**

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Williams