

9th of July 2009

Wendy Thompson

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 have two children, both were planned homebirths with the support of experienced midwives. I felt extremely well cared for during my pregnancies, during the births and

also after my children were born. During my first pregnancy I was very focused on having a natural birth, it was incredibly important to me. I felt that having a homebirth with a midwife was the best chance I had of achieving this. But what I didn't realise until I experienced it, was how fantastic the prenatal and postnatal care of a midwife in the familiar surrounds of my own home would be.

I have had two very positive Homebirth experiences. I would recommend it as a model of care to anyone who wishes to have a natural birth. If I have another child I would also choose to be cared for by an independent midwife and give birth to my child in my own home. I would also like my daughters to be able to choose to have a homebirth for their own children if they so desire.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Thompson