

15/07/2009
Joanne Bailey

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 am writing as a concerned woman and mother with regards to the above bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity to midwives providing care for women giving birth in hospital.

What is not acceptable is the exclusion of homebirth midwives from this funding and indemnity arrangement. Australia needs to support the rights of all women, including the right to choose to birth at home with the registered independent midwife of their choice.

I am appalled that my daughters' rights to birth at home with an independent midwife, just as I birthed her brother and herself, could be taken from her.

This legislation in conjunction 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.

Both my daughter and my youngest son were born at home. There is no comparison in their birth experiences and the birth of my eldest son in hospital. To take away the rights of women to choose where they birth and whom they have present is denying a woman's basic rights. Please make sure that the rights of ALL women, not just the majority, are preserved through this legislation.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Bailey