

14 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**

While it is fantastic that the Federal Government is going to introduce Medicare funding, access to PBS and professional indemnity for midwifery led care, as a consumer who has had a homebirth, it is very disheartening to know that this has not been extended to families choosing homebirth (due to the intersection with the forthcoming change to national registration of health practitioners).

We chose to have a homebirth for our 4<sup>th</sup> and final child as I was excluded from accessing midwifery led care at our local public hospital even though I am in excellent health and have very normal uneventful pregnancies, so the only other way to have one on one care with a midwife was to have a homebirth. Now having had a homebirth, if I had to make the choice again I would never go back to having a baby in a hospital unless medically indicated.

The vast majority of families choosing to birth at home only do so after thorough research and consideration of the evidence. Studies have shown that homebirth is a safe and cost effective option for low risk woman. Even though only a small number of families currently choose homebirth, how can the government discriminate against it when it heavily subsidises birth taking place in other settings. Failing to provide equal support for homebirth will only result in more problems such as families birthing with unregistered care providers or none at all (very unsafe for mothers and babies) and, for woman such as myself, who are excluded from public midwifery models but are unwilling to birth at home without a registered care provider (because we realize that unforeseen complications can occur), being forced back into medical models of care that we know will not give us the best physical and emotional outcomes for birth, and the best possible start for our families.

All consumers deserve to be treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection. Therefore, I urge you to take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Sayers