

8 July 2009  
Judita Marcus

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 specially qualified to discuss this matter as a qualified nursing sister with over thirteen year experience in Europe and a mother and housewife in Australia since 1993. I am hopeful that women will be granted the proper right to choose their place of birth and not be forced into a system which does not suit all mothers to be. Though both our children were born in hospital, our second child, born under the care of a mid-wife, could have easily been born at home. Our plan was to be in hospital; however, in the event that our second child arrived too early (as it occurred, 90 minutes between my water breaking and his birth), knowing that I was probably going to have a rapid birth from my first birth, we had contingency plans to birth at home. What happens in this instance? It was only due to our midwife's cool head and great advice to riding in the back seat of the car like a horse, that I was able to prevent our son from birthing then and there in the car on the way to hospital! As it happened, he started breaching in the lift in the hospital!

I strongly support women who want to home birth, it is safe and practical especially with the excellent back up care that ambulances can provide and doctors can deliver in these times.

Yours sincerely

Judita Marcus