

16th July 2009-07-16
Leonie Lamond

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 am a 31year old mother of two children aged 3 and 4. My first baby was to be a homebirth, unfortunately due to complications arising from that pregnancy and the subsequent very early delivery via classical caesarean section, I am unable (safely) to give birth vaginally and therefore at home in the future. Let me clearly establish this was no way the fault of my midwife, but that my pregnancy went from low to high risk and action was taken accordingly. I believe in obstetricians and hospitals, if it were not for them both my daughter and I would not be here today. I believe in caesarean section and medical intervention, but only if it is needed. I tell you this so that you understand; I am passionate about homebirth and a woman's right to choice yet this proposal has no personal bearing on me other than my pure dismay and heartbreak for the thousands and thousands of midwives, woman and babies in the future who will become criminals if they decide to give birth at home if this bill is sent through unamended.

Yours sincerely

Leonie Lamond.