

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 personally given birth to three healthy children at home in a safe, caring, family environment with the support of an independent midwife with over 20 years experience. Each birth was attended by the same midwife who cared for my babies and myself with the highest degree of professionalism and respect, this enabled my family and myself to experience a wonderful safe way to birth.

My midwife, my husband and I developed a relationship from the 3rd month of my first pregnancy where we had regular visits to check the progress of both mother and baby, classes were held at my midwives home offering an opportunity to connect with others who were also birthing at the same time, information was supplied on all aspects of birthing both physical and emotional aspects were covered extensively, closer to the birth date my midwife visited our home on a more regular basis going from a two week period, down to weekly, then on to every 2 days until labour commenced, in having such close personal contact with a supporting midwife it made the first experience of birth amazing! A beautiful healthy baby girl birthed in a relaxed environment with close family present. The follow up care of an independent midwife is amazing with daily visits for 5 days then every other day for another week, monitoring the babies progress, breast feeding, bonding and the emotional state of the new mother.

I then birthed two more healthy babies at home with the same midwife all babies were born between 2001 and 2007. The same amazing birth experience was then repeated with each birth, in fact the experience grew

each time being in familiar, well supported, safe, experienced hands with every possible angle covered both medically and emotionally.

Homebirth is a safe option.

I have respect for the medical profession and all it has to offer, however it is a women's right to choose where she wants to birth.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Sullivan