

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 chose to give birth to my 2nd child at home, as this was a low risk birth I felt this to be the best option for my situation.

I had 2 independent midwives who I got to know throughout my pregnancy and felt very safe and supported in the comfort of my own home.

I was actually very grateful for my choice to stay home as I had a very fast birth and would not have made it to hospital anyway. So was therefore lucky to have my midwives present to support me shortly after my son arrived.

Please do not take away womans rights to choose how to birth. This will only result in woman then choosing to birth unsupported by a trained midwife and this is not safe.

Yours sincerely
Leanne Hall