

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.

I chose to birth my second child at home. It was a wonderful experience with a caring and supportive midwife. It was very important to me that I had continuous care by the same midwife throughout my pregnancy, and was able to give birth in a comfortable and familiar environment.

I believe every woman has a right to choose how she wants to birth, and that her choice should be supported so that the birth can be as comfortable and as safe as possible. Including homebirth midwifery in the bill will ensure that this is possible.

Yours sincerely

Karen Brown