

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 mother of 2 and have had 1 child in a hospital situation and chose to have my second at home. I cannot believe in this day and age that the Labor Government of Australia is prepared to take away a woman's choice as to where she gives birth. It makes me so angry that we are treated as ignorant or somehow unable to make wise choices for our own families.

I am an educated woman and did a lot of research before I made the decision to have our second child at home and I am absolutely certain that if I have a third child that it is my right to choose where and with whom I birth that child.

I urge you to reconsider this legislation and give privately practicing midwives the appropriate support to help woman safely birth their babies

Yours sincerely

Sarah Tebbutt