

Ms Claire Moore

Chair

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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 given birth to four beautiful babies, three in hospital, and my fourth was born at home with a private midwife. Although the first three births were straightforward, the fourth was one of the most special and memorable events of my life. Because of this beautiful experience, I plan to have homebirths for any other children I may have. To think that this choice may be taken away from me is sad and shocking. My husband,

who was initially against homebirth simply because of the high cost of a private midwife, now completely agrees with me and would happily pay to do it again, even though a hospital birth would cost nothing. Please don't take this option away from us.

Yours sincerely

Natalie Borda