

20<sup>th</sup> July, 2009  
Susan Audet

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Dear Senator Moore

**Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives & 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 & 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.

On a personal level I am a health professional who works with the security professional indemnity . I am a mother of two sons and am currently awaiting the birth of my third child. My first son was born in a Metropolitan Birth Centre. My second son was born in a car on the way to hospital which caused a lot of panic & concern for my husband & I which has led to us

seeking the security & comfort of a homebirth for our third child. Our private midwife is a fantastic professional woman & has the support of my GP. I feel that I'm in better hands than in my first two births. It is vital women and their families are given the choice of having professional midwives support them in a homebirth. Being in rural SouthWestern Australia , women should still have the right to a managed & secure choice of homebirth.

Yours sincerely

SUE AUDET (B.Pharm.AACP, MPS)