

16<sup>th</sup> of July 2009  
Janie Nottingham

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

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 know that it is my duty to keep you informed of MY WILL on anything that comes before Parliament or that should come before Parliament. I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

IT IS MY WILL that you take immediate action to ensure midwives have equal access to funding and professional indemnity insurance regardless of setting.

Please familiarize and educate your selves on this issue and approach it with the dignity and respect that it deserves. It is not appropriate to dismiss the wishes of informed, knowledgeable and educated women and families just because they form a minority.

Yours sincerely

Janie Nottingham