

10<sup>th</sup> July, 2009

Johanna Andreasen

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 am writing this to you personally, 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. Homebirth is not only endorsed by the governments of these countries but supported and encouraged too. They have realized that by supporting homebirth for 'normal' pregnancies of healthy women they can save a huge amount of health system dollars. There has been plenty of research done which illustrates that there are less negative birth/labour outcomes and fewer postnatal complications experienced with homebirths.

As a fully trained midwife I chose to birth my first child at home. It was a carefully considered decision on my part and I was also thoroughly screened by my professional, well trained and very experienced midwife. It was a wonderful experience for my husband and I and our baby. With my second pregnancy I decided however, after considerable discussion to have a Birth Centre birth as my pregnancy had not been completely straight forward. The important point here is that I was able to make a **choice**. Please don't deny other women the right to have a free choice.

The nations mentioned above 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.

Yours faithfully,



Johanna Andreasen.