

Mira Sola

10<sup>th</sup> July 2009

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 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*.

I write to express my concern about some aspect of the bills.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude *homebirth* from this funding and indemnity arrangement. This exclusion of homebirths in 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, as well as, fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to chose homebirth.

The intersection of the current 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 urgent steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills. And also, unfortunately with the dysfunction of the present hospital system it is necessary to include homebirths.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection. Australia must maintain true democracy whereby its citizens have the right of choice and the support with it.

Yours sincerely

Mira Sola