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 feel birthing my child at home gave her the best possible start to life and find feel it would be completely unjust to have my right to choose a home birth for my next child taken away. I am sad and very concerned that such a thing could happen in this wonderful country. My husband and I are very grateful for the health care and hospital systems that our country provides but were happy not to pull on those resources for the birth of our first child as we employed an extremely experienced and dedicated midwife to assist us at home. Parents should have the right to choose! Please consider this extremely carefully when putting together this new legislation.

Yours sincerely

Irena Krol