

13<sup>th</sup> July, 2009  
Rachel Murray

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 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.

As a young women wanting to have children one day I wish to have my baby at home with a fully qualified midwife assisting and supporting. This decision is made from observing and listening to the stories of dear friends who have chosen this option. In supporting homebirths, the government is taking an active step to support the choice of women. A choice they should not be denied.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Murray  
Project Manager  
Centre for Multicultural Youth