

14<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Fiona and Terence Polorotoff

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**

We write to express our concern about the above bills. We 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, where homebirth is either considered the norm, or a valid option for women.

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, which much research has shown to be extremely safe for both mothers and babies.

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 please include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

We whole-heartedly support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

On a personal note, 5 months ago, we birthed our beautiful baby son at home with two wonderful, experienced midwives, with whom we developed a special bond throughout my pregnancy, and with their assistance, achieved a satisfying, empowering and natural birth. Our precious Maxim was born without drugs or unnecessary interventions thanks to the support of our midwives who continued assisting me post-natally and beyond. We understand and appreciate the hospital system is invaluable for pregnant women with medical conditions, or those who simply choose this option, but being blessed with a perfectly normal and healthy pregnancy and baby, we felt that having a homebirth with an intimate support team was the best thing for us. We would love the option to be able to birth our future children in the same environment (legally!), and hope that in a marvelous free country like Australia, women can continue to have a choice.

We appreciate your attention on this matter, and welcome the opportunity to elaborate on our submission should you wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,  
Fiona and Terence Polorotoff