



14<sup>th</sup> of July 2009  
Stefani Iodice

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**

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.

Having had a homebirth with my first child I know how important it is for women to have a choice. I'm pregnant again and I will have another homebirth in October. For me and many other women this is the most natural and safest choice a mother can make in order to give her children the best possible start in life. It is caring, private, without unwanted interventions and empowering for a mother to step into her new role with trust and love. I really hope I will be still able to legally birth my third child at home one day. And I wish many, many other women will have this opportunity and as I think the right to do so.

Yours sincerely

Stefani Iodice