

15<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Via email - community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Moore,

**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 refuse to believe that I may become an outlaw simply because I want to choose where to have my baby, in a safe environment with a birth professional. I planned a homebirth for my first and second sons and received the most fabulous, personal, professional care from a midwife who visited our home. She spent time with me and got to know us as a family. Our midwife supported us emotionally, looked after me physically and has become a family friend.

When I found out we were expecting our much longed for third child, we phoned her immediately (quite early on a Sunday morning if I remember correctly). I needed to know she would be available to share this pregnancy and birthing journey with us. She was overjoyed for us. With her assistance I hope to welcome my child in a familiar, safe, intimate environment with my family around me. The peace of mind of having a qualified, insured independent home birth midwife to be there with us is very important to me.

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

Kind regards,

Susan Farr