

16<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Thea Gange

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 am writing 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 have 2 beautiful children. During both births I was supported solely by midwives and had care second to none. The midwife who attended both of my births was a huge support to me and my family in the lead up to, during and following the birth.

I believe that women should have the choice to birth in the way they want and where they want, attended by who they want.

Should I fall pregnant again birthing at home would definitely be my preference, in the hope that I could be attended by a qualified midwife of my choice. Pregnancy and childbirth is a normal stage of life for women. It is not a disease or a medical condition that needs treating. For women who are healthy having a midwife supported birth at home is the safest place to be.

I trust that the Senate will work to rectify these issues.

Yours sincerely

Thea Gange