

16<sup>th</sup> of July 2009

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.

I am a mother of two. One born in hospital and one at home. My homebirth occurred just after the insurance breakdown where homebirth midwives no longer could get insurance. This meant that it was extremely difficult to find a midwife even in metropolitan Sydney and it also meant that I had to think twice and take responsibility for my choice.

The choice to have homebirth was not a light hearted one. I had a traumatic experience in hospital with my first born, where my rights as a mother and a woman had been taken from me. During my pregnancy with my second I received impeccable care from two registered midwives and I went on to have a beautiful and very healing homebirth. This is the right way to birth for me and this is how I will do it next time again. I am therefore asking you to make this option legal for me and my midwife, so I won't have to do something as unsafe as having my baby completely on my own.

Yours sincerely

Pernille Powell  
*Certified Doula and Childbirth Educator*