

To: The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
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fax (02) 6277 5829.

8 December 2009

Friends of the Birth Centre Qld Assoc. Inc.  
PO Box 93  
GRANGE QLD 4051

Dear Senate Community Affairs Committee,

Re: Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into Midwife Professional Indemnity  
(Commonwealth Contribution) Scheme Bill 2009

Friends of the Birth Centre Association (QLD) Inc (FBC) is a totally volunteer, not-for-profit community organisation established in 1995 by parents who were grateful to receive birth centre care at the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital (RBWH). FBC aims to:

- promote and support birth centres;
- support midwives and other health practitioners who respect a woman's choice of birth;
- support mothers and families in the community; and
- represent consumer interests.

FBC strongly opposes the above Bill for the following reasons:

- the amendments will force independent midwives to have 'collaborative agreements' with doctors before they are able to register and be eligible for Medicare and insurance support;
- the amendments remove choice for women and will make it impossible for a woman to choose private practice midwife-led care in Australia;
- the amendments put doctors rather than women at the centre of maternity care;
- the amendments put the ability of midwives to practice in the hands of doctors rather than an independent registration and licensing body;
- the AMA and Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists do not support homebirth and it is unrealistic to expect that members of these organisations will readily enter into collaborative arrangements with midwives providing women with this choice; and
- the amendments will have a greater impact on women living in rural areas.

It is the position of FBC that birth is a normal, natural and safe process, and that the key to positive birth experiences, better health outcomes for families and less financial burden on the health system is the one-to-one midwifery-led care model for low risk women. This is regardless of whether it is in a Birth Centre, with a private midwife in hospital or a planned homebirth.

FBC supports every woman's choice to hire private midwives who are publicly

funded and fully insured. This choice should not be taken away from Australian women!

We ask that women's right to choose self employed midwives for maternity care be fully respected and not restricted by this amendment.

Regards

Bonny Marsh  
President Friends of the Birth Centre QLD (Inc)