

From: Birth Choices Castlemaine

Date: Wednesday 9 December 2009

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

Dear Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee,
Re: Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009, the Midwife Professional Indemnity (Run-off Cover Support Payment) Bill 2009, and the Midwife Professional Indemnity (Commonwealth Contribution) Scheme Bill 2009.

We are a group of approximately forty members formed as a result of the threats to private midwifery as part of the plans for National Registration of Health Providers. We meet regularly and also use electronic communications methods. Many of us are or were clients of the four private midwives who work in the Mt Alexander and Mt Macedon regions of central victoria. Several of our members have not chosen private midwifery services personally, but are still active in the group.

In this submission, we call on the Community Affairs Committee to reject the current proposed amendments to the above Bills.

Our main concerns are:

- 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 amendment puts 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;
- The amendments will have a greater impact on women living in rural areas.

Yours

Birth Choices Castlemaine