

# **INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH WORKERS**

Submission from

Sarah Haines

To the senate community affairs committee,

I am writing this submission to express my concern over the registration status of Midwives who practice privately (ie not employed by a hospital) under the upcoming national registration. These midwives provide homebirth services to women who employ them for this role.

They have been unable to obtain professional indemnity insurance for their practice since the insurance industry collapsed in 2001, despite having no history of being an insurance risk, their small number means that it is not financially viable for a business to provide cover for them.

The national registration scheme states that a health professional requires this insurance in order to register and practice legally. This leaves midwives in a position if facing up to 7 years in jail if they attend a woman at a homebirth after June 2010.

I had a private midwife attend my 1st child's birth at home in 2007. I am hoping to conceive my next child soon. Currently I have until September 2009 to conceive my next baby so I can again have a homebirth with a midwife. If it is later than this I will have to choose between going to hospital or having a homebirth without a skilled professional present. Both choices frighten me.

It seems that in Australia a woman's right to choose her birth place and her caregiver is being stripped from her. Is this appropriate in a democratic country?

Thank you

Sarah Haines