Dear Mr Snowball and the NRAS Review Team

Many thanks for this opportunity to contribute to the NRAS review (public consultation).

I believe the Review presents the best possible vehicle to recommend that the Nursing and Midwifery Board be made into two separate Boards that would reflect the current status of both discrete professions. As in most western nations, no longer is it the case that a Registered Midwife must also be a Registered Nurse. The changes brought about in the midwifery profession have occurred largely by the demand of consumers (childbearing women) who midwives were pleased to support. There is now much international and national evidence to support the health benefits for women of having a midwifery profession, separate to nursing. I therefore propose that a Midwifery Board be established, the Australian Midwifery Board.

The Australian Midwifery Board would regulate midwives and ensure that:

- Community representatives who are aware of the relevant issues for childbearing women and families are recruited to the Board thereby ensuring accurate assessment of practice-related issues for midwives
- Midwifery practice issues are assessed and regulated by a full Board who are both credible and cognisant of issues in the provision of contemporary, safe maternity care
- Data collection about practising midwives is improved, which will improve workforce planning
- Issues associated with privately practising midwives and eligible midwives would receive attention from individuals who are appropriately qualified and experienced
- Complaints are managed in an appropriate and timely manner which includes the application of the principle of natural justice i.e. to be judged by peers who are competent to make a judgement
- Protection of the public is increased through a midwifery focussed Board, thereby improving responsiveness to emerging issues that require rapid escalation
- There is an increased understanding of the regulatory context for midwives in private practice providing a fee-for-service model
- Cost effectiveness is achieved by appropriate regulation and protection of the public
- The issue of midwifery invisibility in the legislation, and its consequences, would cease
- The Nursing Board would be free of the time consuming complexities of midwifery issues and able to concentrate fully on the important issues for nursing.

Your time and attention given to my submission is appreciated.

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